RECOVERING THE VOICES OF THE UNION IRISH: IDENTITY, MOTIVATION & EXPERIENCE IN IRISH AMERICAN CIVIL WAR CORRESPONDENCE, 1861-65

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Abstract

This thesis is the first to examine Irish American Union service using the words of the ordinary rank and file who fought it. It does so through an analysis of more than 1100 letters written by almost 400 Irish American servicemen, which were uncovered through an assessment of *c.* 168,000 Widows and Dependents Pension Files. Nearly 98 percent of these men served in the enlisted ranks. Taking the contextualised correspondence of these men as a foundation, this thesis proposes the need for a reconfiguration and reframing of perceptions of Irish American service during the Civil War. It puts forward new criteria for how the Irish American contribution should be defined and quantified, and seeks to break new ground by situating it within the field of Civil War soldier studies. Significantly, it finds that previous estimates of Irish American participation in the Union military are too low and have led to an erroneous assumption that they were under-represented. At least 180,000 natives of Ireland donned Union blue, with up to 250,000 Irish Americans serving the United States between 1861 and 1865.

The thesis identifies Irish Americans as a complex and diverse body of men, whose working-class status was as significant as ethnicity in shaping their experience. That experience shared many similarities with that of their non-ethnic comrades, though they faced greater challenges than most in sustaining their commitment and maintaining their morale. Nevertheless, Irish American men demonstrated a constant willingness to enlist, fight and die for the United States throughout the four years of the conflict, a willingness that matched and sometimes exceeded that of non-ethnic men. It was driven in the main by factors such as economic need and opportunity, a sense of duty and patriotism towards America, and an identity that by the dawn of 1861 had caused many of them to see themselves not just as Irish, but as distinctly American Irish.

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This thesis would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of my supervisors Professor David Gleeson and Dr Ann-Marie Einhaus. Their advice, guidance, suggestions and critique proved indispensable throughout what has proved an extremely enjoyable and fulfilling period of research. Special thanks are due to Professor Gleeson for the discussions that initially prompted my re-consideration of undertaking PhD level research into the Union Irish, and for giving of so much of his time to discuss the practicalities of that process. I am also deeply grateful to Northumbria University for the scholarship which enabled me to undertake this PhD, and without which it would not have been feasible. Within the Department of Humanities, Dr James McConnel and Professor Brian Ward provided valuable suggestions and constructive advice during the project's initial phases.

This project owes its ultimate origins to the 2010 establishment of the *Irish in the American Civil War* blog, a decision that led me to the widows and dependent pension files and the beginnings of the database that would form the backbone of this thesis. I am grateful to the Civil War bloggers, readers and supporters of the site who have engaged with and aided the website over the last decade. It has led not only to many new friendships but has consistently challenged me to think about Irish participation in the Civil War in new ways. An example of the scholarly contribution such dialogue can engender lies in the genesis of the decision to re-assess the numbers for Irish service in the conflict. That lay in a series of comments left on the blog by Jim McManus, who consistently maintained that the figure of 150,000 Irish in the Union military was too low, and that the United States Sanitary Commission figures so frequently used constituted only a portion of the real total. It was that exchange that prompted me to

finally move towards undertaking a long threatened in-depth examination of the numbers, and those results now form a part of this thesis.

Heading abroad to undertake full-time PhD research was not an easy decision, but my time in Newcastle proved an enjoyable one, made all the more-so by the regular conversations (and memorable outings) with David and my PhD colleague Andrew Hankinson. Undertaking full-time research in England would not have been possible without the assistance of those at home. I would particularly like to thank my mother Angela Gallagher and my partner Sara Nylund for their unstinting support in that regard. Sara's encouragement, advice and understanding has been exceptional over the years, and she has never been anything but supportive about the seemingly endless amount of time I spend in the company of nineteenth century Irish Americans. There would be no PhD thesis without her.

The bedrock upon which this thesis is built are the pension files that were diligently scanned by a team of archivists and volunteers at the National Archives in Washington D.C. It is to their dedication and professionalism that we owe the accessibility of this material, and it is worth remembering that they were the first to uncover these letters as they carefully prepared each file for digitisation. A particularly special note of thanks is due to Jackie Budell of the National Archives, who oversaw much of that digitisation project. Jackie's remarkable commitment to the work of making the widows and dependent files available has been an inspiration, and her encouragement and support of my own research on them has been humbling. It has been one of the great joys of my engagement with the files that I can now count Jackie and her husband Ken as good friends. I owe an eternal debt of gratitude to Jackie and all those who worked on the National Archives digitisation project for making such extraordinary history accessible to those of us outside of the United States.

Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the University Ethics Committee on 8 January 2018.

I declare that the Word Count of this Thesis is 79,585 words.

Damian Shiels

30 November 2020

Abbreviations

CMSR	Compiled Military Service Record
CWMRA	Civil War Muster Roll Abstracts
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NYSA	New York State Archives
OR	Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies
PHMC	Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
USSC	United States Sanitary Commission

A Note on Conventions

English spelling has been employed throughout, with exceptions where the American spelling is the accepted form in the context of the American Civil War, e.g. “Eastern Theater”. The terms “Irish” and “Irish American” are used interchangeably throughout the text, and in the context of this thesis have the same meaning, namely either men who were born in Ireland, or born outside Ireland to Irish parents. The reasoning behind this is set out in Chapter One.

The reader will encounter dozens of different individuals in the pages that follow. Unless expressly stated otherwise, each of the men whose experiences are utilised were members of the rank and file. In order to avoid unduly cluttering the text with repeated rank and unit designations, these are used variably throughout. Those seeking information on the specifics of each man’s unit, service and fate can find it in the appendix, where brief military biographies of these soldiers and sailors are presented.

Much of the thesis which follows is built around the original correspondence of working-class Irish immigrant servicemen, many of whom struggled with their literacy. In order to maintain the historical authenticity of their voice, the quotes utilised present their words as they were originally written. They so frequently stray from spelling and punctuation conventions that to employ [ ], sic. or similar strategies to ease the burden on the reader would serve only to further confuse their meaning. As a result, on occasion the reader will be required to do more work than is standard with quotes utilised in Civil War soldier studies. Nonetheless, the rewards of this approach outweigh any loss that altering the text would bring. For more difficult examples, the key to comprehension lies in the phonetics of the letters the man utilised, and in such instances the reader will profit from approaching the passage by “speaking” it in their mind.

Introduction

The early hours of 1 July 1862 had been tough for Patrick Dooley. Indeed, it had been a pretty harrowing week. For six days he and his comrades in the Army of the Potomac had been under arms, caught in a seemingly ceaseless pattern of move, fight, move, then fight again. Along the way there had been little time for food, never mind sleep. Finally, having trudged about the heavily wooded countryside all through the hours of darkness, they reached their destination. A few days later Patrick would recall it as "a large Open Country abounding with corn and fruit", where the "wheat was in stacks", an image that recalled for him memories of the "Old Country."[1] The name of the place was Malvern Hill. On that day Patrick Dooley, a 26-year-old stonecutter from Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, was among *c.* 57,000 Union and Confederate soldiers who would contest one of most ferocious engagements of the war on its slopes. In the days that followed, Patrick wrote two letters to his mother describing what he had seen. He had been particularly struck by the awe-inspiring sight of the whole army drawn up in line of battle, with "different Banners fluttering in the Breeze." One stood out, he assured his mother, as "of all the old green-flag was most admired." Beneath it, the Irish Brigade "looked most cheerful", while their leader Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher—the former Young Ireland leader and darling of Irish America—was being "most admirably gazed upon by all the yankees he looked splendid…"[2] As Patrick Dooley told it, in that moment of martial splendour before the breaking of the storm, it had been the Irish Brigade who had drawn the rapt attention of all present. Patrick

[1] Patrick Dooley to "Dear Mother" 7 July 1862, in Widow's Certificate No. 6206, Approved Pension File of Mary Dooley, Mother of Patrick Dooley, Company C, 40th New York Infantry. Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of the Army and Navy Who Served Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, Records Group 15, Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, NARA. Hereafter all pension files are referred to by WC number.

[2] Patrick Dooley to "Dear Mother" 7 July 1862, WC6206.

garnered immense pride from the fact that the Irish had afterwards backed-up their rousing appearance with their actions on the field. Having recounted the harrowing particulars of his personal experiences, he offered an appraisal of the Irish performance: "…all our Irish Regiment took a most prominent part in the Fight and Suffered Severely the Splendid 9th Massachusetts Reg^{t} lost Severely, also the Irish Brigade and the 37th Irish Rifles, and other Irish Regiments…"[3]

Given his bursting Irish pride, it might be expected that Patrick Dooley had stood shoulder to shoulder with Meagher's boys under the Irish Brigade's green banner, or had endured the maelstrom among his countrymen of the 9th Massachusetts. But like the majority of Irish Americans in uniform, he had chosen not to serve with either of them. Instead he had faced the Confederate onslaught alongside comrades in a non-ethnic, mixed unit—the 40th New York Infantry. Patrick may have picked a different path, but he recognised that it was the ethnic regiments of the Army of the Potomac who were seen as the ultimate expression of Irish commitment to the Union. He understood that their performance was centrally important in shaping how Irish Americans were perceived by others in the United States. He knew that because of all this, those at home were always eager to learn of their fate. These are perceptions that have stood the test of time. Just as the Irish Brigade captivated the attention of the massed ranks on Malvern Hill that summer in 1862, they and the other ethnic regiments have been captivating the memory and historiography of the Irish in the American Civil War ever since. Across almost 160 years, the Irish American experience of the conflict has been judged and defined through the prism of that minority of men who served beneath those green flags, and through the words of an even smaller cohort—largely officers in those same ethnic regiments—who committed their experiences to paper. The seemingly irretrievable

[3] Patrick Dooley to "Dear Mother" 15 July 1862, WC6206.

stories of the silent majority—men like Patrick Dooley—have long been lost in their wake.

This thesis looks beyond those who marched beneath the green flag to examine the totality of the Irish American contribution to the United States war effort. It is the first analysis of Irish American service to do so by drawing on the voices of enlisted soldiers and sailors taken from across the armies and navies of the North. These voices were long thought lost to scholars of Irish America, but they have survived, lying "hidden" within the vast collection of widows and dependents pension files at the United States National Archives. This study gathered a group of them together into what now represents the largest and most significant corpus of ordinary Irish writings from the American Civil War. That in turn has allowed the analysis which follows to break free from the strictures of source-survival that have enforced a reliance on the privileged voices of a handful of community leaders, ethnic officers, and ethnic units.

The research conducted for this thesis reveals that Irish Americans served in significantly greater numbers than has previously been appreciated, and demonstrates that the long-standing belief that they were under-represented in the Union military is unfounded. It shows that although these men are habitually considered solely from the standpoint of their ethnicity, their class was of equal importance, and they represent the most readily defined group of white urban working-class volunteers in northern service. The analysis identifies those areas where their wartime experiences were comparable to that of their non-ethnic comrades, and where they differed. It examines the discrimination they faced, and how and why they discriminated against others. Of the plethora of insights their contextualised correspondence offers up, perhaps the most significant are those that surround identity and motivations. Here these men reveal not conflicting loyalties towards their new home, but an ever-growing embrace of an

identity that was at once American *and* Irish. This bred a sense of American patriotism and duty that—together with stark economic necessity—became the main drivers for their service. In the end, the pages that follow identify a significantly more varied, nuanced and complex picture of Irish American service than has previously been possible.

Recovering the Voices of the Union Irish

At least 180,000 Irish-born men served the Union during the American Civil War.[4] They were joined by tens of thousands more "ethnic Irish"—the American, Canadian and British-born children of Irish immigrants. The disparate nature of their service and their generally low societal status has combined to defy efforts at broad analysis. A further crucial hindrance has been the dearth of surviving Irish American letters. For despite their vast numbers, working-class Irish American servicemen and their families have left little in the way of personal communications. This lack is most commonly attributed to poor literacy rates and a lower likelihood of letter preservation among working-class families.[5] Lawrence Frederick Kohl has described this absence as a handicap that afflicts all those who work in the field, forcing them to turn to Irish newspaper editors and a small number of prominent Irish Americans in search of the Irish voice.[6] It is a deficit recognised and repeatedly highlighted by all scholars of the Civil War Irish, who despite extensive research efforts have had to accept this restricted

[4] For a detailed analysis of this figure, see Chapter Two.

[5] See e.g. Susannah Ural, *The Harp and the Eagle: Irish-American Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 4; Reid Mitchell, "Not the General but the Soldier: The Study of Civil War Soldiers" in James M. McPherson & William J. Cooper Jr. (eds), *Writing the Civil War: The Quest to Understand* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 90; James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), ix.

[6] Lawrence Frederick Kohl, "The Harp and the Eagle: Irish-American Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861–1865 (Review)" *Civil War History* 54:3 (2008), 314.

source base and develop alternative approaches to build on the limited material available.[7]

The want of a major body of writing created by the ordinary Irish who participated in the American Civil War has hitherto presented a major obstacle to scholars of the Irish experience. Without it, an understanding of how these servicemen viewed themselves—in terms of their identity, their motivations and their patriotism—can only be approximated. We can know little of how the war impacted them and their families both in uniform and on the Home Front, or how those views changed (or endured) through the course of the conflict. However, one source holds up a potential solution to this challenge, offering a sweeping "new" tranche of Irish American letters for us to consider.

Historian Ruth-Ann M. Harris has stated that the lack of documentation on immigrants requires that historians be "innovative in identifying and using nonconventional sources" in order to recover the immigrant world.[8] This thesis has been grounded in pursuing the potential of one such nonconventional source, and was rewarded with the identification of unprecedented numbers of this most precious of source materials. The new corpus of Irish American letters on which the analysis is built were identified and extracted from within the pension applications of widows and dependents of soldiers and sailors who served during the American Civil War.[9] The file

[7] For a recognition of this deficit see e.g. Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, xii, 3, 4; Ryan W. Keating, *Shades of Green: Irish Regiments, American Soldiers, and Local Communities in the Civil War Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 17.

[8] Ruth-Ann M. Harris, "'Come You All Courageously': Irish Women in America Write Home" in Kevin Kenny (ed) *New Directions in Irish-American History*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 209.

[9] The files form part of the Records of the Department of Veteran Affairs, Record Group 15. They are contained within the *Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of the Army and Navy Who Served Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, 1861-1934* and the *Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Navy Veterans, 1861-1910.* Each file is referred to by a unique Widow's Certificate (WC) number. One set of wartime correspondence was also drawn from a "Navy

which produced the letters of Patrick Dooley is one of more than 168,000 that were assessed as part of this project, a process that generated a database of 1135 letters, written by 395 different Irish American soldiers and sailors, who served in the forces of 22 different states and districts, and in more than 260 distinct units. Of the correspondents, almost 98 percent entered the service as enlisted men. An additional 297 pieces of other contemporaneous correspondence, largely notifications of illness, injury and death, but including letters from wives, family etc., have also been identified.[10] This uniquely rich archive forms the building blocks for the analysis which follows.

The Methodological Approach to the Pension Files

The pension files of the widows and dependents of army and navy servicemen (commonly referred to as the "Widows Pensions" or "Widows Certificates") which provide the raw material for the analysis in this thesis are housed in the U.S. National Archives in Washington D.C. The resource consists of *c.* 1.28 million case folders of the widows, dependent parents, siblings and minor children of servicemen and veterans, the majority of whom served during the American Civil War. The first pension legislation enacted as a consequence of the American Civil War came into being on 22 July 1861. Congress allowed that as part of Lincoln's call for 500,000 volunteers, those who were wounded or disabled in service would be entitled to the same benefits as those who had been disabled in the regular army. The only provision for widows in this

Survivor's" file, contained within the *Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Civil War and Later Navy Veterans, 1861-1910*, part of the same Record Group. Affidavits from Irish American pension files that did not contain correspondence were also considered and utilised in the discussion that follows.

[10] The study group designated "Correspondents Only" in the thesis refers to the 395 men who wrote or had letters composed. The "Full Corpus" are these 395 men plus those who had other forms of contemporaneous correspondence in their file, and totals 568 men.

act was that they (or a serviceman's legal heir) would receive a sum of one hundred dollars and arrears of pay and allowances in the event of a volunteer's death.[11] However, the act did not cover those who had already proffered their services—such as many of the volunteers who had fought at Bull Run. Unsurprisingly, this proved inadequate and during the early war period many families relied heavily on local and state wide philanthropic initiatives for financial support when a serviceman was away or had been disabled or killed.[12] Eventually, on 14 July 1862, Congress passed a new act which provided for all men who were disabled by wounding or disease during their service. Sections 2-4 of the legislation went on to make provision for the families of those who had died, with the wording proving critical in precipitating the subsequent submission of servicemen's correspondence as part of the application process. It stated that a soldier or sailor's:

> …widow, or, if there be no widow, his child or children under sixteen years of age, shall be entitled to receive the same pension as the husband or father would have been entitled to had he been totally disabled, to commence from the death of the husband or father, and to continue to the widow during her widowhood, or to the child or children until they severally attain to the age of sixteen years, and no longer…[if the serviceman] shall not leave a widow nor legitimate child, but has left or shall leave a mother who was dependent upon him for support, in whole or in part, the mother shall be entitled to receive the same pension…[if the serviceman] has not left or shall not leave a widow, nor legitimate child, nor mother, but has left or may leave an orphan sister or sisters, under sixteen years of age, who were dependent upon him for support, in whole or in part, such sister or sisters shall be entitled to receive the same pension…[13]

This 1862 act created the pension system that was expanded and modified in the decades that followed the Civil War.[14] For the eligible dependents of a private soldier, the pension amounted to a payment of $8 per month, but there were a number of

[11] William H. Glasson, *Federal Military Pensions in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, American Branch, 1918), 124.
[12] For a discussion of such initatives see Robert H. Bremner, *The Public Good: Philanthropy and Welfare in the Civil War Era* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1980), 73-90.
[13] Library of Congress Law, Statutes at Large: 37th Congress, Volume 12, Chapter 166, "An Act to grant Pensions", https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/37th-congress/session-2/c37s2ch166.pdf, accessed 29 October 2020.
[14] Glasson, *Federal Military Pensions*, 125.

circumstances by which eligibility could be lost—such as if a widow remarried, or if the dependents were deemed to have supported the rebellion. As historian Megan McClintock has shown, this initiative was not simply intended as a means of supporting those impacted by the war. It was also designed as an effort to encourage recruitment at a time when volunteers were sorely needed, by demonstrating to prospective volunteers that their families would be taken care of should anything befall them.[15] After 1862, a series of additional acts between 1865 and 1868 broadened the eligibility criteria and sought to prevent abuses. For example the supplementary Act of 6 June 1866 allowed for the inclusion of orphaned brothers and dependent fathers, but also stipulated that the widow of a serviceman should have her pension halted if she had either abandoned her children or was not fit to care for them due to "immoral conduct."[16] On 25 July 1866 widows with children under sixteen became entitled to an additional $2 per month for each minor child, while on 27 July 1868 an order of precedence was established for eligibility in cases where servicemen had left neither a widow or child: "first, mothers; secondly, fathers; thirdly, orphan brothers or sisters under sixteen years of age…"[17]

The original 1862 law had stipulated that dependent parents were required to prove their son had contributed towards their support prior to his death. This was the major reason behind the inclusion of soldier and sailor letters in many dependent parents' applications, as they sought to demonstrate that their son had remitted monies to them during his service. Other approaches parents could adopt included securing affidavits

[15] See Megan J. McClintock, "Civil War Pensions and the Reconstruction of Union Families", *The Journal of American History* 83:2 (1996), 459-463.

[16] Library of Congress Law, Statutes at Large: 39th Congress, Volume 14, Chapter 106, "An Act supplementary to the several Acts relating to Pensions", https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/39th-congress/session-1/c39s1ch106.pdf, accessed 29 October 2020. In these instances, the widow's pension was halted until the children had reached their majority.

[17] Library of Congress Law, Statutes at Large: 39th Congress, Volume 14, Chapter 235, "An Act increasing the Pensions of Widows and Orphans, and for other Purposes", https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/39th-congress/session-1/c39s1ch235.pdf, accessed 29 October 2020.

from others in their community attesting to the provision of such support.[18] This portion of the act was altered in 1873, so that parents now just had to show their son had supported them through "actual contributions or in any other way"; it changed again in 1890, when all parents with no means of support—regardless of whether their deceased child had ever aided them—became eligible as long as their child had died as a result of his service.[19] These amendments, which lowered the criteria for approval of a dependent parent's claim, undoubtedly had an impact on the frequency with which original wartime correspondence was included in their applications.

The sheer scale of the pension system was one of its most notable features, and is why it is both such a rich and such a daunting resource. Its mammoth size was becoming apparent even before the war was over; by the end of June 1864 some 26,000 widows and dependents had been granted pensions based on the existing criteria.[20] By 1883, there were *c.* 52,000 widows on the pension rolls, and after the major legislative expansion of 1890 a large number of the 145,359 Civil War widows then recorded would have become eligible.[21] By 1893, 966,012 pensioners (veterans, widows and dependents) required an annual expenditure of $165.3 million, a sum that amounted to over forty percent of the entire federal budget.[22]

This thesis is the first to systematically mine the widows and dependent pension files in a far-reaching and systematic way to uncover new details about the service and

[18] McClintock, "Civil War Pensions", 467.
[19] McClintock, "Civil War Pensions", 468-71.
[20] Glasson, *Federal Military Pensions*, 129.
[21] Amy E. Holmes, "'Such is the Price We Pay': American Widows and the Civil War Pension System" in Maris A. Vinovskis (ed) *Toward a Social History of the American Civil War: Exploratory Essays*, (Cambridge, New York & Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 174.
[22] Holmes, "Such is the Price", 172; Maris A. Vinovskis, "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War? Some Preliminary Demographic Speculations" in Vinovksis (ed) *Toward a Social History*, 26-27; Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 128-129.

wartime experience of Irish American servicemen. Some historians of the Irish experience—notably Ryan Keating and Marion Truslow—have previously incorporated analysis of the widows and dependents files into their research, though in both cases it formed but one element of their analyses, and was restricted to a relatively small number of individuals within ethnic regiments that fell within their defined research parameters.[23] Where pension files have been explored, scholars have tended to focus the majority of their attention on the applications of veterans, using them to reveal the impact of conflict on the post-war lives of these men and their families.[24] While these veteran files undoubtedly contain large amounts of social data, they often do not match the granular detail common in the widows and dependents pension files, as it was generally easier for a surviving veteran to prove his eligibility.

Heretofore, the extremely rich potential of the files (both of veterans and of widows/dependents) has been put to the greatest use by those exploring nineteenth century African American life.[25] This was initially driven by the same lack of conventional sources that has encumbered the study of the nineteenth century Irish. A

[23] See Keating, *Shades of Green* and Marion A. Truslow, "Peasants into Patriots: The New York Irish Brigade Recruits and Their Families in the Civil War Era, 1850-1890" (PhD: New York University, 1994). The widows and dependents files Keating and Truslow examined were part of a broader review of pensions associated with service in the ethnic regiments they had selected as their focus. Both also analysed a significant number of veteran pension files associated with their chosen units, further highlighting what such files can reveal about wider Irish American life in the nineteenth century.

[24] For a good recent example of such work, see Sarah Handley-Cousins, *Bodies in Blue: Disability in the Civil War North* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2019).

[25] See for example Elizabeth A. Regosin and Donald R. Shaffer, *Voices of Emancipation: Understanding Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction through the U.S. Pension Bureau Files* (New York: New York Unversity Press, 2008). This forms a part of an ever-growing body of scholarship utilising Civil War pensions to explore the African American experience during the nineteenth century; aside from work previously cited see e.g. Larry M. Logue and Peter David Blanck, ""Benefit of the Doubt": African-American Civil War Veterans and Pensions", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38:3 (2008); Dora L. Costa, "Pensions and Retirement among Black Union Army Veterans", *The Journal of Economic History* 70:3 (2010). They are also being increasingly utilised as part of digital projects, such as the John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History's "Black Virginians in Blue" project. See https://naucenter.as.virginia.edu/tags/black-virginians-blue.

pilot examination by Elizabeth A. Regosin and Donald R. Shaffer of the files for data pertaining to the formerly enslaved found that large amounts of detailed social information existed, including significantly earlier first-person accounts than those of the better known Works Progress Administration (WPA) Slave Narratives of the 1930s.[26] Somewhat surprisingly, prior to the research project undertaken for this thesis, the widows and dependents pension files have not been systematically examined across a wide-ranging spectrum with respect to any other target ethnic population, despite the extremely detailed social information they contain.[27] The methodological approach adopted in this thesis is one that could just as readily be applied to the exploration of other understudied and largely "silent" groups, such as the native-born white working class, or fellow immigrants. From the perspective of nineteenth century Irish social history, their importance cannot be overstated. The scale and range of detail the files include are unparalleled by any other surviving source in either Ireland or the United States. This makes their neglect by historians of the Irish all the more significant; a neglect that is symptomatic of the general lack of detailed scholarly attention afforded to the impact of the American Civil War on Irish populations beyond those who specialise in Civil War history.[28]

The value of the widows and dependents case folders lies in both the array of documentation that can be found within them and the level of detail dependents were required to provide in order to satisfy the Pension Bureau's eligibility criteria. Each folder includes papers created and compiled by the Pension Bureau as well as those

[26] Regosin and Shaffer, *Voices of Emancipation*, 4.

[27] The files have been utilised to explore various aspects of social history, albeit not on a large scale. See for example Laura Salisbury, "Women's Income and Marriage Markets in the United States: Evidence from the Civil War Pension", *The Journal of Economic History* 77:1 (2017).

[28] For efforts to raise awareness among historians in Ireland of the value of this resource see e.g. Damian Shiels "Widows and Dependent Parents American Civil War Pension Files: A New Source for the Irish Emigrant Experience" in Ciarán Reilly (ed) *The Famine Irish: Emigration and the Great Hunger* (Dublin: The History Press Ireland, 2016).

supplied directly by the prospective pensioner to support their claim. The key element of the majority of widows and dependents files is the affidavit. These were usually supplied by the applicant and, if necessary, by a range of other individuals supporting the application. Those who provided these affidavits—known as the affiant—could include, among others, family members, friends, neighbours, acquaintances, employers, landlords, shopkeepers, physicians and current/former servicemen. At the heart of each of these affidavits was the provision of evidence required by the Bureau. Examples could include stating that a son had financially supported a parent; stating that a couple had been married; stating that a living husband was unwilling or unable to support his wife. Where possible, applicants would seek to include official copies of marriages and baptisms if they existed or if they could obtain them, with military records and medical appraisals also common.

Unsurprisingly, the files provide a vast amount of personal contextual information for each of the servicemen and their families, often spanning decades, and often allowing them to be traced both pre- and post-immigration. Each element serves as a building block for reconstructing some of the life experiences of these Irish Americans, and in so doing reveals rare detail and provides unique insights into broader aspects of the immigrant experience. For example, dependent parents who needed to demonstrate their son had financially supported them often described where he had lived, where he had worked, what he earned, and what he had spent his money on. Dependent mothers who could not rely on living husbands for support might outline to the Bureau a history of violence or alcoholism that led to abandonment, or describe how their husband was broken down by age and a life of hard labour. Widows and dependents seeking to prove events in Ireland—be it a marriage, or financial support—often revealed information on chain migration, step migration, maintained links across the Atlantic, and remittances. It

is inclusions such as these that mark the pension files out as a unique and invaluable source of data for social historians of the Irish American experience.

Where an applicant struggled through other means to provide a piece of evidence or simply wanted to reinforce their connection to a serviceman, they resorted to including original letters. Although these were often valuable to the families—and they sometimes requested that they be returned—once they had been submitted as part of an application they became official Federal records. Although this has ensured their survival, it is worth remembering that for many parting with them must have been a severe emotional wrench. This is one of the reasons that only a small percentage of files contain such correspondence. Where they are included, they take two principal forms; letters written by servicemen to their family during the conflict, and letters written by officers, comrades, or hospital staff informing families of illness, injury or death. Very occasionally other types were submitted, such as pre-war letters from a future serviceman, letters from a family member to the soldier or sailor, or letters between other family members. Applicants sometimes included just a single letter; on other occasions they submitted an entire series that spanned months or years of service. The letters were always included for a specific reason associated with the claim—for example if a soldier mentioned sending money home to his parents, or if they proved a familial relationship (e.g. if the man had enlisted under an alias). This selection process is significant, as there was no censorship with respect to the remainder of a letter's content. The Pension Bureau were entirely uninterested in the sentiments expressed in any of the letters, once it provided them with the facts they needed to make a determination on an applicant's pension eligibility. In light of this, applicants could submit any letters they possessed that satisfied those narrow requirements. Whereas the affidavits, written in hope and expectation of financial reward, undoubtedly sought to provide a narrative that applicants hoped would ensure success, the letters represent a

purer form of record. These "ego-documents" were of their moment, created with no expectation of ever being seen or read beyond an immediate circle of family, friends and acquaintances. As such, they are ideal for seeking insights into issues of identity, motivation and experience among Irish American soldiers and sailors during the American Civil War.

Despite the wealth of the resource, identifying and extracting letters from the widows and dependents pension files is a challenging and laborious process. In order to identify files associated with Irish American service and to build a corpus of letters on which to base analysis, a total of *c.* 168,100 files were assessed for correspondence. This was undertaken on a part-time basis over the course of a number of years. The assessed files consisted of 148,100 applications approved for the widows and dependents of army personnel, and *c.* 20,000 files associated with the widows and dependents of navy personnel. Combined, this represents around thirteen percent of all widows and dependents files.[29]

The material was accessed digitally via the Fold3 website.[30] It is worth noting that an assessment as wide-ranging and extensive as was required for this thesis has only become possible through digitisation, as it allows for the (relatively) efficient review of large numbers of files. Limitations on the physical numbers of documents that can be pulled from the National Archive stacks, together with the sheer bulk of the files, makes such an undertaking all but impossible in its absence. A small number of files that were known to contain Irish or Irish American correspondence that were not digitised were also included in the project.

[29] Based on a total of *c.* 1.28 million widows and dependents pension files.
[30] https://www.fold3.com/.

Each of the pension files on the Fold3 website has been scanned in its entirety in partnership with the National Archives, a process which involved a strict quality-control process overseen by National Archives' archivists. The methodology the National Archives implemented for the project also ensured that the scanned material constitutes a viable representative sample of northern Civil War servicemen upon which to base broad range analysis. The 148,100 army files were digitised in numerical order from WC1 to WC148,100 ("WC" representing "Widow's Certificate"). In effect this means that the files are in chronological order, representing all approved applications by widows and dependents stretching from the inception of the pension act in 1862 through to the start of the 1870s. This period coincides with the pension eligibility criteria most likely to cause applicants to include original letters as part of their application. The approach adopted by the National Archives also means that the vast bulk of the digitised files relate to men who died during the Civil War or immediately afterwards as a direct result of their service. The *c.* 20,000 navy pensions assessed for this study originally formed part of a National Archives microfilm publication (M1279) and represent the great majority of all naval widows and dependents pensions granted between 1861 and 1910.[31]

Though *c.* 168,100 files have been digitised, limits as to their searchability have undoubtedly restricted the degree to which scholars have sought to utilise them for wide-ranging analysis. Each file can contain dozens and occasionally in excess of a hundred documents, but none are transcribed, and none are text-readable or text-

[31] A small number of naval widows and dependents certificates await digitisation. As noted above, one wartime set of letters from an Irish American "Navy Survivor's" file was also included in the database. The digitised naval files relate not just to sailors who died during or immediately after the Civil War, but also those that died in the decades that followed. As there is no outward indication on any given file as to the specific period it relates to, all were assessed as part of this project, though only Civil War correspondence was included in analysis.

searchable.[32] They are organised on the basis of serviceman surname and certificate number; in the case of the army widows and dependents files, these surnames are further arranged by company, regiment, branch of service and state; in the case of the navy widows and dependents files they are organised by surname/certificate number only. As might be expected, this makes detailed analysis of the files both daunting and time-consuming, and is perhaps one the reasons why historians of Irish America have not previously utilised this material. Yet, the rewards of collating a "new" body of correspondence relating to the Irish undoubtedly justifies the undertaking.

Given the arrangement of the files, the only feasible approach for identifying potential Irish Americans was through surname analysis. The potential effectiveness of such an approach for identifying nineteenth century Irish emigrants has previously been demonstrated by scholars such as Malcolm Smith and Donald MacRaild.[33] Nevertheless, it is not without limitations, the most notable being the introduction of a bias against those surnames which were common in both Ireland and Britain (and by extension among native-born white Americans) during this period. It also leads to an under-representation of Irish Protestants, who were more likely to have surnames common outside the island. Efforts were made to address these issues through the occasional exploration of surnames that had cross-national commonalities, and by assessing all files, regardless of surname, within units that had ethnic Irish associations.

The surnames connected with each of the *c.* 168,100 files were assessed with recourse to Edward MacLysaght's *The Surnames of Ireland*, the standard genealogical

[32] Subscribers to Fold3.com can digitally annotate files, with those annotations then becoming searchable. However this is sporadic and erratic, and does not facilitate scholarly analysis.

[33] See Malcolm Smith and Donald M. MacRaild "The Origins of the Irish in Northern England: An Isonymic Analysis of Data from the 1881 Census", *Immigrants & Minorities,* 27: 2/3, (July/November, 2009).

work on the topic.[34] For the army widows and dependents files this assessment was undertaken systematically by state and unit, and for the navy widows and dependents files alphabetically by surname. Where a file was deemed to be potentially Irish American, it was digitally "opened" to review the documents contained within, and to determine if original correspondence was included. In the majority of instances, original letters were identified with relative ease from amongst the other digitised documents, due to their more informal appearance and increased levels of damage and wear. Wherever letters were located, details pertaining to the file and individual were entered into the project database.[35] When completed, this database represented the unrefined corpus of correspondence.

Though the project database contained many probable Irish American letters, a refinement process was required in order to confirm ethnicity. This took the form of a review of the remainder of the documents within the pension file, together with supplementary analysis of available military and service records, published rosters and census returns. Only those individuals who were demonstrably of Irish birth, who had Irish parentage, or for whom there was otherwise strong evidence of Irish ethnicity were included in the final database. The "otherwise strong evidence" were cases where the majority of affiants were of Irish ethnicity (evident through either census returns or surname analysis), suggesting that the serviceman in question was also of probable Irish origin, or cases where a soldier with an Irish surname was serving in an ethnic Irish formation. This final refined database, designated the "corpus database", collated all of

[34] Edward MacLysaght, *The Surnames of Ireland* (Newbridge, Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 1985).

[35] Though as comprehensive as is possible, undoubtedly some files containing Irish American correspondence were missed.

the available information in a range of fields to provide the contextual framework within which the letters were created.[36]

The methodological approach applied to the letters combined both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The quantitative elements involved the analysis of the ethnic and military background of the correspondents compiled for the corpus database. The qualitative elements examined the letter content itself, seeking to address topics that would elucidate the identity, motivations and experiences of ordinary Irish American servicemen during the course of the conflict.

The corpus of letters assembled for this thesis offer up an unprecedented wealth of new information. As with all sources, it has a range of strengths and weaknesses which should be acknowledged at the outset.[37] The context of their deposition is significant, given that it may have insulated the correspondence from the type of self-curation that some veterans (and veteran's families) may have exercised when depositing letter collections for the purposes of preserving an individual's memory and legacy. The letters submitted to the Pension Bureau do not carry this baggage—they either contained the evidence required to prove pension eligibility, or they did not. The context and cause of their survival has meant that these letters represent a particularly valauble group of literary documents, but it has also meant that for some soldiers and sailors only a small number of their letters have survived.[38] Similarly, it is invariably the

[36] The fields included were: Name, WC Certificate No., Correspondence Type, First Rank of Serviceman, Unit, State, Enlistment Date, Enlistment Type, Marital Status, Pre-Service Employment, Nativity Country, Nativity State/County, First Pension Address, 1860 Pension Address, No. of Serviceman Letters, No. of Other Letters, Notes.

[37] The limitations inherent with respect to the content of nineteenth century letters are discussed in greater detail at relevant points throughout the thesis, such as in the Historiographical Context below and in Chapter Three.

[38] In his important work on the Civil War soldier, Peter Carmichael has demonstrated that the ideal case study allows the historian to view a series of letters written over an extended period, given the changing perceptions that often characterised men's service. See Peter S. Carmichael, *The War for the Common Soldier* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 172.

case that only one side of the literary conversation has been preserved, and we are left to speculate as to the content of the correspondence these men were receiving, and to which they were responding.

Like most correspondence from the American Civil War, the letters contained within this corpus were not subjected to censorship, and the men were free to speak candidly about their military lives. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that they exercised varying degrees of self-censorship.[39] The majority were writing to female relatives, individuals whom they often sought to shield from the realities of service and with whom they wanted to project a certain persona. They were also well aware that their correspondence was not entirely private, as it was likely to be shared among a number of individuals. These limitations aside, perhaps the singular importance of the corpus lies in the fact that it represents a collection of working-class correspondence that would not have survived in any other context. The realities of life for the nineteenth century poor mitigated against the inter-generational retention of letters, not least due to limitations of space and transience of accommodation. Had they not been submitted to the Pension Bureau, the great majority would have been lost to history. It is an extraordinary boon for scholars that they were not.

Historiographical Context

Though this is the first major study to focus on Irish American correspondence from the American Civil War, it is not the first to examine Irish emigrant correspondence. Kerby Miller made extensive use of more than 5,000 emigrant letters and memoirs in his *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*, employing them

[39] This self-censorship has been recognised by other scholars, see for example Christopher Hager, *I Remain Yours: Common Lives in Civil War Letters* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2018), 74.

in combination with his broader quantitative analysis to build a somewhat bleak picture of the Irish American "exile" in the nineteenth century United States.[40] David Fitzpatrick's *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia* took as its building blocks a corpus of 111 emigrant letters, and sought to highlight the value of examining nineteenth century Irish correspondence in conjunction with an effort to provide personal context.[41] Fitzpatrick viewed the letters both as a source for textual analysis and a means of exploring the emigrant letter as a "cultural institution" and an "expression of popular culture", drawing from his approach broader detail on topics such as emigrant culture, identity and perceptions of home.[42] In another notable contribution on Irish emigrant correspondence, *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan*, Kerby Miller and his fellow editors examined a series of documents (including 48 letters) relating to Irish immigrants in America between 1675 and 1815.[43] As well as revealing the personal experiences of the correspondents, the editors felt that the letters demonstrated (and aided) the development through time of new networks, communities and identities in America that were linked to both the newcomers' Irish birth and their religious beliefs.[44]

The body of work carried out on Irish (and other) emigrant letters has served to reveal not only the opportunities that these documents present, but also the potential

[40] Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 4.
[41] David Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1994), vii.
[42] Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*, 23. The other themes Fitzpatrick used the letters to explore were "ceremonies of communication", "politics of kinship", "process of migration", "images of Ireland" and "images of Australia".
[43] Kerby A. Miller, Arnold Schrier, Bruce D. Boling and David N. Doyle (eds), *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675-1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). For an analysis of the approached utilised in this book, see David A. Gerber, "What Is It We Seek to Find in First-Person Documents? Documenting Society and Cultural Practices in Irish Immigrant Writings", *Reviews in American History* 32:3 (2004): 308.
[44] Miller et al., *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan*, 9.

pitfalls to be guarded against.[45] As Fitzpatrick pointed out, it is vital to interpret correspondence within its appropriate context. Letters were not always just benign efforts to keep in touch, but could be "designed to influence and sometimes manipulate readers" through the selection of content.[46] This "functional significance" has often been overshadowed by a desire to mine the letters purely as sources of perceived "fact."[47] Similarly, caution must be exercised in interpreting statements committed to paper as absolute representations of an individual's long-term beliefs. For example, epistolary historian David A. Gerber has reflected on the extent to which expressions of allegiance made by immigrant soldiers during the Civil War can be viewed as representative of wider views maintained beyond the time and place of their committal to paper.[48] Nonetheless, letters are recognised as a central component of efforts to write history from below, and as a valuable source of information concerning a broad array of topics.[49] Ultimately, as David Omissi has asserted with respect to the value of such correspondence from the First World War, "the crucial issue, is, surely, less what we *cannot* learn from these letters, than what we *can* learn from them."[50]

[45] For more analyses of Irish emigrant letters from this period see Patrick James O'Farrell, *Letters from Irish Australia, 1825-1929* (Sydney, New South Wales: New South Wales University Press and Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1984); Edmundo Murray, *Becoming Irlandés: Private Narratives of the Irish Emigration to Argentina 1844-1912* (Buenos Aires: Literature of Latin America, 2005); Other approaches to Irish emigrant letters include those that focus on linguistic analysis, see e.g. Emma Moreton, "Letters from America: Themes and Methods in the Study of Irish Emigrant Correspondence" in Celeste-Marie Bernier, Judie Newman and Matthew Pethers (eds), *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century American Letters and Letter-Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016). The work of Charlotte Erickson on English and Scottish correspondence has also been influential on Irish approaches to the topic. See Charlotte Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants: The Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972).

[46] Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*, 24-25.

[47] Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*, 24.

[48] Gerber, "What Is It We Seek", 312.

[49] Max Friedman, "Letters across Borders: The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants (Review)", *Journal of Social History* 42:3 (2009), 837; Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*, 25.

[50] David E. Omissi (ed), *Indian Voices of the Great War: Soldiers' Letters, 1914-18* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 9.

In advocating potential new research focusing on the county nativity of soldiers, historian Timothy J. Meagher has noted that it could "allow a topic seemingly so overwritten as Irish participation in the Civil War" to be seen in a new light.[51] But appearances can be deceptive. Indeed, it is surprising just how little detailed and considered scholarly analysis has been produced on Irish service in the Union military. Much of the output is often filiopietistic in nature, and/or restricted to examining the military exploits of a handful of ethnic Irish units—most usually the Irish Brigade.[52] The same holds true for works on individual Union Irish American leaders during the conflict, which almost exclusively gravitate towards biographies of Thomas Francis Meagher.[53] Neither has analysis of the Irish in the American Civil War benefitted from the almost total neglect it has suffered from historians in Ireland. Despite its place as one of only two modern conflicts to witness Irish-born service on such an enormous scale, it remains largely ignored both within and without Irish scholarly circles.[54] The degree to which it is omitted from consideration within the Irish historical field was recently highlighted in the landmark *Cambridge History of Ireland*, which characterised

[51] See Timothy J. Meagher, "From the World to the Village and the Beginning to the End and After: Research Opportunities in Irish American History", *Journal of American Ethnic History* 28:4 (2009), 130.

[52] Aside from a reluctance to critically analyse their subject, another difficulty that a number of popular works on the Irish suffer from is an extremely broad definition of what constituted an Irish American. For a recent example of work that exhibits these traits see Phillip Thomas Tucker, *The Irish at Gettysburg* (Charleston: The History Press, 2018).

[53] Although a comprehensive scholarly history of the Irish Brigade that takes their story beyond the Civil War is yet to be undertaken, there are a number of useful studies. Perhaps the best military history of the Brigade currently available is Joseph G. Bilby, *Remember Fontenoy!: The 69th New York and the Irish Brigade in the Civil War* (Highstown, New Jersey: Longstreet House, 1995); For a particularly fine example of an ethnic Irish regimental study, see James B. Swan, *Chicago's Irish Legion: The 90th Illinois Volunteers in the Civil War* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2009). Arguably the most useful of the Meagher biographies is John M. Hearne and Rory T. Cornish, *Thomas Francis Meagher: The Making of an Irish American* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006). The standard for future studies of major Irish figures in northern service has now been set by Mark Dunkelman. See Mark H. Dunkleman, *Patrick Henry Jones: Irish American, Civil War General, and Gilded Age Politician* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015).

[54] On this issue as it pertains to the undertaking of diaspora history in Ireland, see Enda Delaney "Our Island Story? Towards a Transnational History of Late Modern Ireland", *Irish Historical Studies*, 37:148 (November, 2011).

the similar numbers of Irishmen deployed in British wartime service during the First World War as having "dwarfed all other enterprises in Irish history".[55] Perhaps more surprisingly, the conflict has also largely failed to elicit significant levels of bespoke attention from specialist scholars of Irish America. Despite the quality and importance of recent work in that field, the huge outpouring of social documentation created by the Civil War remains largely untapped. The majority of references to the conflict within the scholarship of Irish America tend to summarise the findings of Civil War scholars, and it is rarely tackled in detail.[56]

By far the most significant contributions to our understanding of the Irish in Federal service have been made by a relatively small cohort of dedicated Civil War historians based in the United States. The questions they have posed are most commonly framed around the motivations behind Irish enlistment, the degree of loyalty they felt towards the United States, how their response to the call to arms compared to that of other groups—such as the Germans and native-born white Americans—and the extent to which the support that was proffered was maintained throughout the conflict. One of the first to tackle these issues was Ella Lonn, the pioneering historian of foreigners in the Union and Confederate military. Writing in the 1960s, she acknowledged that reasons behind service could be many, varied and mixed, but felt that among the strongest displayed by Irish servicemen was a desire to "strike a blow at England" and to escape

[55] See David Fitzpatrick, "Ireland and the Great War" in Thomas Bartlett (ed) *The Cambridge History of Ireland*: *Part II – War, Revolution and the Two Irelands, 1914-1945*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 231. Such a conclusion requires a definition of Irish history as something that only occurs within the bounds of the island of Ireland. For a discussion of the neglect of the study of the Irish in the American Civil War in an Irish context, see Damian Shiels, "Ireland's Forgotten 'Great War'?", *History Ireland,* 24:4 (July/August, 2019).

[56] For an example see J.J. Lee and Marion R. Casey (eds) *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States* (New York & London: New York University Press, 2006). There are notable exceptions, for example Tyler Anbinder's work on the draft and substitutes, discussed later in this thesis.

poverty, with Lonn characterising the latter as a "mercenary" motive.[57] She identified a waning of Irish political support for the war as it continued but felt it "did not affect their ardour for war or their stubbornness with which they fought on the battlefield."[58] Lonn's analysis is hampered by her reliance on ethnic stereotypes, such as proffering that Irish soldiers were possessed of "a volatile temperament" and lacked "a sense of value and foresight." Nevertheless, she was of the view that Irish-born servicemen were over-represented in the Union military.[59]

Following Lonn's efforts it was almost twenty years before a detailed analysis of Irish American service for the North appeared in print. In his 1988 *Melting Pot Soldiers: The Union's Ethnic Regiments*, William L. Burton argued that while Irish Catholics in the pre-war North frequently prioritised Irish nationalism over the American Republic, when the conflict came Irishmen largely fought for the same reasons as others, "to support their friends and comrades and to preserve the Union."[60] Stressing the similarities between Federal troops, Burton argued that ethnicity was significantly more important to Irish officers than to the rank and file, whose private thoughts "were largely indistinguishable from those of the Germans, Americans, and others."[61] Indeed Burton went further, advancing the thesis that most ethnic volunteers deliberately avoided ethnic units when they enlisted, instead privileging "neighbourhood, state, personal friendship, occupation and even alternative myth" over the pull of ethnicity.[62] Ultimately he viewed the conflict as the "melting pot" of his title,

[57] Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 66, 74-75.
[58] Lonn, *Foreigners*, 43.
[59] Lonn, *Foreigners*, 15 (n26), 578.
[60] William L. Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers: The Union's Ethnic Regiments* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 29, 152-153.
[61] Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*, 153-154.
[62] Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*, 227.

concluding that "the best-kept secret of the ethnic regiments is how truly American they were."[63]

The most comprehensive and important effort to understand Irish American service for the Union has come in the form of Susannah Ural's 2006 *The Harp and the Eagle: Irish American Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861-1865.* Ural felt historians had lacked a "central theme" in their efforts to explain Irish American service in the Union army, and identified what she regarded as a common thread linking their disparate service—dual loyalties to Ireland and America.[64] In *The Harp and the Eagle* she saw economics, a desire to gain military experience for a future war in Ireland, and an opportunity to prove loyalty through military service as key motivators for Irish enlistment.[65] Ural argued that as long as Irish Americans perceived that the interests of Irish America and the United States were aligned they were willing to serve, but mounting losses and the Emancipation Proclamation caused many to prioritise Ireland and Irish America over all else:

> for most [Irish], service and support for the war were founded as much in their loyalty to Ireland as in their loyalty to America, if not more so … Some may have maintained their motivation through pure American patriotism, but for a population largely comprised of recent immigrants, the need to see the war in terms of what it could provide them as Irishmen was greater than the need to see it in terms of their American identity.[66]

Far from helping to integrate the Irish into America as Burton had argued, Ural points to native perceptions of these conflicted loyalties and the degree of Irish involvement in

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[63] Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*, 233.

[64] This reference coming from the paper published based on her thesis, see Susannah J. Ural, ""Remember Your Country and Keep up Its Credit": Irish Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861-1865", *The Journal of Military History* 69:2 (2005), 331. Ural argues elsewhere that "Irish volunteers, regardless of geography, had dual loyalties to Ireland and the United States, and it was this shared devotion to both countries that inspired their service." See Susannah J. Ural, ""Ye Sons of Green Erin Assemble": Northern Irish American Catholics and the Union War Effort, 1861—1865" in Susannah J. Ural (ed) *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America's Bloodiest Conflict* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2010), 101.

[65] Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 41.

[66] Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 81, 134-135.

events such as the 1863 New York Draft Riots as perpetuating anti-Irish prejudice, something that undeniably continued long after the conflict.[67]

Christian G. Samito's 2009 *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish-Americans, African-Americans and the Politics of Citizenship During the Civil War Era* interpreted much of Ural's proposed evidence for divided loyalty in a different light. Samito construed it not as an indicator of compromised allegiance, but rather as part of an effort by Irish community leaders to place Irish ethnic culture within the context of allegiance to America.[68] He assessed Irish Americans as broadly loyal to the Union and the Constitution, viewing their experience of the war as something that ultimately strengthened their American identity.[69]

The latest detailed study in the field is Ryan W. Keating's 2017 *Shades of Green: Irish Regiments, American Soldiers and Local Communities in the Civil War Era.* Keating cast his net beyond the New York-Philadelphia-Boston Irish heartlands to explore the Irish experience through the lens of three ethnic regiments in Connecticut, Wisconsin and Illinois.[70] He posits that different Irish communities in the North did not necessarily have a shared experience of the conflict. Though like Ural he perceived dual allegiances, he also discerned the central importance of both local community and defence of the Union as factors driving enlistment.[71] Echoing Burton, Keating argued

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[67] Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 232.

[68] Christian G. Samito, *Becoming American under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship During the Civil War Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 111-112.

[69] Samito, *Becoming American*, 130, 173.

[70] The regiments Keating selected were the 9th Connecticut Infantry, 17th Wisconsin Infantry and 23rd Illinois Infantry.

[71] Keating, *Shades of Green*, 13, 15, 246 (n22), 158. These works represent the major published academic studies of Irish service for the Union, but there are a number of others which touch on the topic, though there is no significant divergence in their analysis from that of the scholars discussed. See e.g. Martin Öfele, *True Sons of the Republic: European Immigrants in the Union Army* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2008); Christian B. Keller, "Flying Dutchmen and Drunken Irishmen: The Myths and Realities of Ethnic Civil War Soldiers", *The Journal of Military History* 73:1 (2008); Brodie Nugent, "Her Exiled Children in America: Irish American

that the service of these men solidified their relationship with their adopted country, seeing them emerge as American soldiers.[72] Of these works, Keating's was the first to attempt a bottom-up analysis in an effort to understand Irish service for Union, combining traditional sources with analysis of military, pension and census records.[73]

All these scholars have been forced to rely to a greater or lesser extent on largely similar source material, much of which is top-down in character. These most frequently include the two major contemporary ethnic newspapers, the New York *Irish American* and Boston *Pilot*; the writings and speeches of Irish American community leaders, particularly those based in New York; and the post-war memoirs and histories of the period written by Irish veterans, particularly those associated with ethnic Irish regiments.[74] These sources have inherent limitations that raise questions about how

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Identity and the Civil War", *Flinders Journal of History and Politics* 31 (2015). The most comprehensive published analysis of the Irish experience of the American Civil War from the perspective of Ireland can be found with Joseph M. Hernon, *Celts, Catholics & Copperheads: Ireland Views the American Civil War* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1968).

[72] Keating, *Shades of Green*, 172-3.

[73] The foundations of Keating's analysis is based on information compiled on 5,029 men from his selected units, see *Shades of Green*, 16. In addition to Keating, Marion A. Truslow's 1994 PhD thesis examined 280 pension files associated with the New York regiments of the Irish Brigade, while James Zibro's 2016 PhD thesis also sought to take a bottom-up approach to the Irish, assessing 3,701 Irish soldiers using as a primary building block regimental descriptive books. See Truslow, "Peasants into Patriots", xix-xx; also Marion A. Truslow, "The New York Irish Brigade Recruits and Their Families" in Arthur H. Mitchell (ed) *Fighting Irish in the American Civil War and the Invasion of Mexico: Essays*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2017), 37-59; James Zibro, "The Life of Paddy Yank: The Common Irish-American Soldier in the Union Army" (PhD: The Catholic University of America, 2016), 9-17, 233-243. For a further call to utilise service records in an effort to gain an insight into working-class Irish American soldiery, see Tyler Anbinder, "The Harp and the Eagle: Irish-American Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861-1865 (Review)", *The Journal of Southern History* 75:2 (2009).

[74] Irish American veterans of the conflict—most particularly those associated with ethnic units—published a wealth of material in the decades that followed the war's conclusion. Personal memoirs were supplemented by a number of regimental histories that extolled the virtues of Irish service. For memoirs see e.g. William Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life: Three Years with the Irish Brigade in the Army of the Potomac*, reprint edited by Lawrence Frederick Kohl, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992); Thomas Francis Galwey, *The Valiant Hours; Narrative of "Captain Brevet," an Irish-American in the Army of the Potomac* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole, 1961); William McCarter, *My Life in the Irish Brigade: The Civil War Memoirs of Private William Mccarter, 116th Pennsylvania Infantry*, edited by Kevin E. O'Brien, (El Dorado Hills, California: Savas, 1996); William J.K. Beaudot and Lance J. Herdegen (eds), *An Irishman in the Iron Brigade: The Civil War Memoirs of James P. Sullivan, Sergt., Company K, 6th Wisconsin Volunteers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1993). For brigade and unit

representative of the wider Irish American experience conclusions drawn from them can be. They serve to inexorably draw focus onto the proportionately small number of Irish who served in ethnic units, most particularly the Irish Brigade, relying on them to act as representatives of the whole. Yet these formations were atypical of the Irish experience, and their public pronouncements cannot be securely relied upon as proxies for the motivations and commitment of the tens of thousands of Irish-born soldiers who spent their wartime service outside them. By extension these sources also run the risk of significantly amplifying Irish nationalism. Both the *Irish American* and *Pilot* newspapers promoted Irish exceptionalism, consistently reproduced letters relating to the Fenian Brotherhood, and carried speeches and statements from community leaders that linked different views on the Civil War to Irish interests.[75] Scholars such as Ural and Burton have interpreted such references in different ways, but they have caused both to highlight the importance of Irish freedom as a major motivational factor in service. Though these newspapers were certainly read in significant numbers by Irish American servicemen, particularly in ethnic units, we have little evidence to indicate if the nationalist views expressed in them were deeply shared by all.[76] Were these men

histories see e.g. David Power Conyngham, *The Irish Brigade and Its Campaigns* (New York: William McSorley & Co., 1867); Michael H. MacNamara, *The Irish Ninth in Bivouac and Battle, or, Virginia and Maryland Campaigns* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1867); Daniel George MacNamara, *The History of the Ninth Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, Second Brigade, First Division, Fifth Army Corps, Army of the Potomac, June, 1861-June, 1864* (Boston: E.B. Stillings & Co, 1899); Anthony W. McDermott, *A Brief History of the 69th Regiment Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteers: From Its Formation until Final Muster out of the United States Service* (Philadelphia: DJ Gallagher & Company, 1889); St Clair A. Mulholland, *The Story of the 116th Regiment Pennsylvania Infantry* (Philadelphia: F. MacManus Jr & Co, 1899); Thomas Hamilton Murray, *History of the Ninth Regiment, Connecticut Volunteer Infantry,"the Irish Regiment," in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-65: The Record of a Gallant Command on the March, in Battle and in Bivouac* (New Haven, Connecticut: The Price, Lee & Adkins Company, 1903).

[75] For discussion of the Irish American press in the Civil War, see Cian T. McMahon, *The Global Dimension of Irish Identity: Race, Nation, and the Popular Press, 1840-1880* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 111-144.

[76] On the role of Ireland and Irish nationalism in the Irish American press, see Cian T. McMahon, "Ireland and the Birth of the Irish-American Press, 1842–61" *American Periodicals: A Journal of History & Criticism* 19:1 (2009), 5-20; William Leonard Joyce, *Editors and Ethnicity: A History of the Irish-American Press, 1848-1883* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 74-100.

reading these newspapers to obtain local news from Ireland—which these publications were renowned for—or were they doing so because of their fervent belief in the political message they espoused? How many Irish American servicemen chose not to read them at all, preferring to get their information from a different source? In a similar vein, we cannot know the extent to which sources like the printed contemporary speeches of Irish American community leaders reflected the real-life priorities of the wider Irish American populace, particularly beyond ethnic enclaves in New York, Boston and Philadelphia. This was an era when attending public-speaking events by notable orators was regarded as a major social occasion. When speakers such as Thomas Francis Meagher injected the visage of Ireland and Irish nationalism into public events and recruitment drives, was this meant literally, or did it form part of a mutually expected rhetorical nod to Ireland on the part of both speaker and audience?[77]

These are just some of the questions that these sources raise, questions that have been largely unanswerable in the absence of significant material that provides the perspective of ordinary soldiers and sailors. The new correspondence analysed for this thesis allows for the first major analysis of Irish American service that does not overwhelmingly rely on ethnic units. As a result, it offers the potential to build on the important and rigorous scholarship that has previously been undertaken, and in some cases to offer a distinctly different set of answers to those that have been provided by the established sources.

Beyond the direct analysis of the Irish in the northern military, two other spheres of investigation are particularly relevant in providing comparative material with which to view the Union Irish experience—the study of the Irish in the Confederacy and of the

[77] It is perhaps worth noting here that even a figure such as Meagher, who used nationalistic rhetoric to good effect and who had an unblemished track record with respect to Irish nationalism going into the war, was reticent to take any further direct action himself following the conflict, understandably choosing to prioritise his new life in the United States.

Germans in the Federal army. In the case of the former the leading work is David T. Gleeson's *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America.* Gleeson concludes that the Irish ultimately proved to be "ambiguous Confederates", who though reluctant secessionists nonetheless embraced the Confederacy and served in significant numbers proportionate to their population size. While many fought well—largely driven by a desire to express their manliness and martial prowess—ultimately most grew disillusioned with the conflict, a fact reflected in higher Irish desertion rates and a readiness to accept defeat sooner than their native-born southern compatriots.[78] Despite their somewhat mixed record, Irish Confederate service and most importantly their post-war enthusiasm for the Lost Cause were vital in helping to integrate the Irish in the South.[79]

The Germans were the only comparable immigrant group to the Irish in the service of the Union, though they appear to have served in greater numbers. The analysis of Christian Keller, the leading historian of the German experience in the Civil War, found that though Germans joined up for a range of reasons, defending the flag and the Constitution were among the most common. They were less homogenous politically than the Irish (a slight majority of Germans voted Democrat in 1860) and there is also a possibility that they may have been less likely to serve in ethnically mixed units than the Irish.[80] The Germans also provide a salutary lesson in the potential risks of large-scale ethnic homogeneity in service, as evidenced when German troops were held responsible for the 1863 defeat at the Battle of Chancellorsville. The outpouring of anti-German

[78] David T. Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 221-224; For his broader discussion of the Irish experience in the South over the course of the nineteenth century, see David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815-1877* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

[79] Gleeson, *Green and the Gray*, 1, 187-220.

[80] Christian B. Keller, *Chancellorsville and the Germans: Nativism, Ethnicity, and Civil War Memory* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 11-13, 26-29.

sentiment it engendered had a profound impact on their ethnic communities, which Keller argued saw them turn inward, becoming more German at the expense of Americanisation.[81]

One of the major benefits in recovering such a large corpus of ordinary correspondence from Irish American servicemen is that it facilitates a more comprehensive consideration of their place within the field of Civil War soldier studies. The paucity of identified written correspondence from working-class Irish Americans is partly responsible for their lack of inclusion within the majority of work in this area.[82] In his 2008 review of leading literature in the field, Christian Keller was able to identify precious little mention of immigrant servicemen in works on either the Union or Confederate service.[83] This creates significant issues for Civil War soldier studies, as it has become accepted as the primary vehicle by which to understand the nature and character of ordinary service during the conflict. Given the extremely high levels of immigrant and ethnic service in Federal forces, particularly in bodies such as the Army of the Potomac, the absence of these voices raises the same question marks that exist within the dedicated historiography of Irish American service. How representative are conclusions drawn that are based overwhelmingly on just that portion of the military that were "native" American? How analogous or divergent were their experiences from those of Irish Americans?

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[81] Keller, *Chancellorsville*, 3-4.

[82] The lack of Irish American correspondence sits in stark contrast to the ocean of material that was left behind by most other groups who saw service during the American Civil War. See Aaron Sheehan-Dean, "The Blue and the Gray in Black and White: Assessing the Scholarship on Civil War Soldiers" in Aaron Sheehan-Dean (ed) *The View from the Ground: Experiences of Civil War Soldiers* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 9.

[83] Keller, "Flying Dutchmen", n.3, 119-120. Most scholars acknowledge these omissions at the outset of their studies. For example Gerald Linderman was explicit that his work was concerned with the volunteers of 1861 and 1862, and did not examine the ethnic or African American experience. See Gerald F. Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (New York: The Free Press, a Division of the MacMillan Company, 1987), 2.

Where the Irish have been discussed within Civil War soldier studies, it is often only in a most general way. In his ground-breaking 1952 work *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union*, Bell Irvin Wiley represented Irish service in a stereotypical fashion, noting that they were "less idealistic" than other immigrant groups, were driven to enlist by a "sheer love of combat", performed better in attack than defence, and were by turn both jovial and difficult following drink.[84] Similarly James I. Robertson Jr. in *Soldiers Blue and Gray* confined his discussion of Irish American soldiers to referencing their "sparkling wit and dry humor", and their reputation for an "overfondness for whiskey and brawls."[85] In acknowledging the lack of immigrant correspondence as a deficiency in his important and influential study *For Cause and For Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*, James M. McPherson noted that American-born white soldiers from the middle and upper classes "were more likely to write letters or keep diaries and their descendants were more likely to preserve them than were working-class, foreign-born, black or slaveless soldiers." McPherson viewed these biases as a potential "blessing in disguise", stating "the purpose of this book is to explain the motives of Civil War soldiers for fighting. I am less interested in the motives of skulkers who did their best to avoid combat. My samples are skewed toward those who did the real fighting."[86]

Of course, all this is not to suggest that letters have been wholly absent from the consideration of Irish American soldiers in the Civil War. But such engagement as there is has been focused on the small corpus that currently exists. Indeed, when it comes to

[84] Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1952), 308-309.
[85] James L. Robertson Jr, *Soldiers Blue and Gray* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 28.
[86] McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, ix. There has been significant development and growth in the field of Civil War soldier studies in recent years, though few deal with Irish American service in any detailed way. The most major of these works are referenced in comparative analyses later in the text.

the published correspondence of Irish American working-class soldiers during the American Civil War, one volume stands supreme—*Irish Green and Union Blue: The Civil War Letters of Peter Welsh*, edited by Lawrence Frederick Kohl with Margaret Cossé Richard.[87] Consisting of sixty-five letters written by Irish American carpenter Peter Welsh between September 1862 and May 1864 (when he was mortally wounded), they are particularly notable for Welsh's justifications of why he was fighting for the Union cause. So ubiquitous have they become that when Civil war historians seek a quote from an Irish American soldier, it is invariably towards *Irish Green and Union Blue* that they turn. In and of itself, this is a measure of the dearth of available Irish American correspondence from the period. Indeed, since their original publication in 1988, Welsh's letters have been so frequently used that he is now regularly erroneously referenced as "Irish-born" or "Irish" when he was actually of Canadian nativity.[88] Though there are a small number of other published collections of Irish American correspondence from Union servicemen, the great bulk of them were created by the officer class.[89] In fact, Irish American working class letters from the war have never

[87] Lawrence Frederick Kohl and Margaret Cossé Richard (eds), *Irish Green and Union Blue: The Civil War Letters of Peter Welsh* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986). Though few, there are nonetheless a number of unpublished sources for working-class Irish correspondence from the period that have been identified through the diligent efforts of scholars. Susannah Ural in particular has mined archives on both sides of the Atlantic in an effort to uncover this material. Nonetheless, they are rare.

[88] For such references, see for example Gary W. Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: Harvard University Press, 2012), 5; McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 113; Öfele, *True Sons of the Republic*, 70; Joseph Glatthaar, "A Tale of Two Armies: The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and the Union Army of the Potomac and Their Cultures", *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 6:3 (2016), 326.

[89] Examples of published Irish American correspondence of this type include Gene Barr (ed), *A Civil War Captain and His Lady: A True Story of Love, Courtship, and Combat* (El Dorado Hills, California: Savas Beatie, 2016); Ryan W. Keating (ed), *The Greatest Trials I Ever Had: The Civil War Letters of Margaret and Thomas Cahill* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2017); Julian Mohr and Gary Piatt (eds), *A Magnificent Irishman from Appalachia: The Letters of Lt. James Gildea, First Ohio Light Artillery, Battery L* (Milford, Ohio: Little Miami Publishing, 2003); Christian G. Samito (ed) *Commanding Boston's Irish Ninth: The Civil War Letters of Colonel Patrick R. Guiney, Ninth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998); Richard M. Trimble (ed) *Brothers 'Til Death: The Civil War Letters of William, Thomas and Maggie Jones 1861- 1865, Irish Brothers in the 48th New York Volunteer Regiment* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2000);

been identified or drawn together in large enough numbers to provide the type of wide-scale comparative insights that are now becoming possible for groups such as the Germans.[90]

In light of such issues, the newly collated collection of correspondence transforms the known body of written material created by working-class Irish Americans during the conflict. The fact that the correspondence represents letters written as the Civil War was ongoing is also important. While the writing of all Irish American soldiers and sailors is undeniably valuable, it is necessary to differentiate between materials generated during the conflict and those that were created retrospectively. In seeking to gain insight into the unvarnished perspectives of Irish Americans, the correspondence of servicemen composed during the war itself is significantly more valuable than post war recollections and memoirs, which are inevitably subject to the vagaries of memory and often to personal, political and ethnic agendas.

Chapter Structure

The chapters that follow seek to utilise the new compilation of correspondence to build on previous scholarship and adopt a broader view of Irish American service than has heretofore been possible, encompassing what Ryan Keating has termed the different "Shades of Green" found in Irish American communities across the North.[91] Just as the

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Molly E. Kodner (ed) *My Dear Molly: The Civil War Letters of Captain James Love* (St. Louis, Missouri: Missouri History Museum Press, 2015). Of these, only the Jones brothers in the 48th New York were not officers. Specific Irish American letter sets have also been the subject of discussion and analysis in various smaller-scale articles, e.g. see Ruth-Ann M. Harris and Sally K. Sommers Smith, "The Eagle and the Harp: The Enterprising Byrne Brothers of County Monaghan", *Irish Studies Review* 18:2 (2010).

[90] See Walter D. Kamphoefner and Wolfgang Johannes Helbich (eds), *Germans in the Civil War: The Letters They Wrote Home* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). Kamphoefner and Helbich drew together over three hundred letters written by seventy-eight Germans during the conflict.

[91] Keating, *Shades of Green*, 13, 15.

value of individual letters is enhanced by contextual grounding, so too is any discussion of Irish American participation in the conflict. This is provided in Chapter One, which sets the scene through an examination of nineteenth century Irish emigration and antebellum Irish American society on the eve of war. This reveals that while there was a broad cultural homogeneity among Irish Americans, there was widespread variation in their personal emigration and life histories, variations which they carried through into service. As well as providing the backdrop for some of the conflicts and clashes that Irish Americans would face in uniform, the chapter seeks to answer a question with which Civil War historians have struggled—just what constituted an "Irish American" serviceman?

The need for a repositioning of Irish Americans in the Union military beyond a focus on ethnic regiments is the primary concern of Chapter Two. It widens the discussion to explore the totality of that service, and through a major reappraisal of their distribution and numbers demonstrates that their contribution to the Union war effort has been significantly underestimated. Having demonstrated the nature and extent of their involvement, the chapter next considers the contextual information gathered on the "new" correspondents, illustrating the degree to which they are representative of Irish America. This contextualisation also brings to the fore an aspect of their character that is frequently overlooked, though it was every bit as important as their ethnicity—their almost ubiquitous working-class backgrounds.

An examination of how Irish Americans adapted to military life begins Chapter Three. It does so with particular reference to aspects of camp and campaign life that were common to all in the military, in order to assess how the Irish experience compared with that of their non-ethnic comrades. As well as tackling issues such as reactions to combat and their martial expectations of others, this chapter explores the

importance of faith to the Irish American soldier and sailor. Catholic Irishmen in particular faced numerous challenges in maintaining connections with their religion, and this discussion provides significant new evidence as to how they did so. Far and away the most consequential relationships that Irish American servicemen had during the Civil War were with those on the Home Front. The discussion here reveals the impact their working-class status had on that relationship, and how their sense of duty to uniform and sense of duty to family interacted as a result. The chapter concludes by analysing another aspect of service that Irish Americans found difficult, but which was similarly vital to their wellbeing—their physical communications with home, friends and family.

Irish Americans in service were regarded as suffering from a number of character flaws and negative traits, some of which have persisted in the popular imagination. Chapter Four examines these from the perspective of the Irish American, and seeks out their causes and veracity. It starts with the issue of masculinity and manhood, aiming to discover how closely the Irish conformed to the notorious image of the "roughs" and "rowdies". Their famed love of alcohol is similarly tackled, as are the higher desertion rates that are generally attributed to the Irish in uniform. The second half of the chapter delves into some of the causes, consequences and responses to the nativism and prejudice that was directed against Irish Americans while in the military, and draws back the curtain on the racism that they in turn doled out towards African Americans. It ends by exploring the nature and extent of their wartime commitment to the Democratic Party, an affiliation that drew much opprobrium upon them as the conflict progressed, and long after its conclusion.

The final chapter is concerned with the topic that has been the subject of the most debate among historians—how Irish Americans identified, and why they enlisted. In

order to properly understand why they joined the United States armed forces in such numbers, it is crucially important to develop a grasp of how they positioned themselves in the context of both America and Ireland. To that end, Chapter Five begins with a detailed examination of expressions and indicators of "Irish" identity in uniform, before seeking out manifestations of "American" identity in like fashion. Given the prominence afforded to the Fenian movement and Irish nationalism as a motivator for enlistment, these and other interactions with Ireland are assessed to determine how important they were as markers for Irish sentiment, identity and service. The chapter concludes by looking directly at motivations for service, uncovering among other evidence the reasons the men themselves gave for their decision. In so doing, it reveals the main drivers that caused hundreds of thousands of Irish Americans to risk their lives in order to preserve the American Union.

Chapter One

Origins & Backgrounds: The Union Irish on the Eve of War

Union sailor Denis Horgan fits the archetypal image of the Irish immigrant in Federal service. A recent arrival, he had landed at Manhattan's Castle Garden in the spring of 1857 following a seven-week journey from his native Cork, Ireland's most populous county. Though he had lost his father Danny at the height of the Great Famine, he and his fruit-seller mother Mary had toiled hard to make sure they were not among those at the very bottom of Irish society. As a boy in the early 1850s he had taken what work he could around their Shandon home, filling positions as a common labourer, a porter, and in the local stables. As a dutiful and responsible son, he had handed his earnings over to his mother each Saturday night to put towards the running of the household. Slowly, as he grew older and more experienced, Denis's weekly wages rose from a low of 2s 6d to a respectable 7s. This provided the cushion he needed to save for a passage to America, and so he requested that his employer put a shilling a week aside for his transatlantic journey.[1]

Like many other Irish emigrants, Denis's status as a single passenger belied the commitments he maintained in Ireland. Upon his arrival in America he was expected to remit some of his earnings back to Cork and to gather the funds needed for his mother to join him. Neither was he travelling into the unknown. Once in New York, Denis wasted little time in writing to his uncle and grandmother, both residents of Boston. Having overspent on the voyage in an effort to supplement his meagre on-board rations, Denis asked them to send "some help to take me to Boston please god I would Be

[1] Affidavit of Mary Horgan 28 December 1871, Affidavit of Owen Sullivan 3 May 1869, Affidavit of John Duggan 29 April 1869, Affidavit of Cornelius Cunniff 27 December 1877, Affidavit of William Conlon 1 January 1878, all in Navy WC2318.

grateful to you and not to let me starve in a strange land".[2] They duly obliged, and Denis Horgan set out for Massachusetts. Once there he tried his hand at labouring and as a teamster, but the work was too temporary. Eventually he headed for New Bedford, and new opportunities. Denis signed on to the crew of a whaler, a job that brought big risks, but potentially big rewards. In 1862, he was returning from his second trip aboard a fully laden vessel when disaster struck, and the ship went to the ocean floor along with her precious cargo. He survived to return to Boston, but was left penniless. On 23 May—the day after he came ashore—Denis Horgan presented himself at the Boston Naval Rendezvous and became a United States sailor.[3]

Denis Horgan's pre-service "backstory" in Ireland and the United States provides a contextual framework that is crucial in seeking to understand his decision to serve the Union. It illustrates in microcosm the necessity of examining the personal and societal environments of the men who would enlist during the American Civil War. This chapter is concerned with the "backstory" of the Irish communities that produced these future Federal soldiers and sailors. Just as these men were shaped by their individual histories, they were also products of their societies, and of influences both within and without Irish America. An examination of when and why they came to the United States and what life was like for them once they got there provides a vital contextual backdrop to their service. Crucially, it also facilitates deeper engagement with a question with which Civil War historians have long struggled—just how should an Irish American in the Civil War era be defined?

[2] Denis Horgan to "Dear grand mother and uncle" 21 March 1857, Navy WC2318.
[3] Affidavit of Mary Horgan 28 December 1871, Affidavit of Owen Sullivan 3 May 1869, Affidavit of John Duggan 29 April 1869, Affidavit of Cornelius Cunniff 27 December 1877, Affidavit of William Conlon 1 January 1878, all in Navy WC2318; Weekly Returns of Enlistments at Naval Rendezvous, NARA. Hereafter "Naval Rendezvous".

1.1 Irish Nineteenth Century Emigration to 1865

The conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 plunged Ireland (and much of Europe) into recession. The years that followed witnessed a collapse in both agricultural and rural industrial economies as grain prices plummeted, wool and cotton production fell, and the linen industry became increasingly mechanised.[4] A growing shift from tillage to grazing led to the consolidation of estates and a commensurate rise in evictions.[5] These events proved a catalyst for a marked increase in emigration from Ireland to the United States and ultimately for a fundamental shift in the demographics of Irish America. Whereas eighteenth century transatlantic migration had been dominated by Irish Protestants, particularly from Ulster, by the 1830s Catholic immigrants had overtaken them for the first time in more than a century.[6]

Though large-scale Irish Catholic emigration to the United States has popularly been viewed as a consequence of the Great Famine, mass migration from Ireland was well underway prior to that catastrophe. Historian David Doyle estimates that even had the Famine not occurred, up to a quarter of 1846-50 emigrants and half of 1851-60 emigrants would have left anyway.[7] In the thirty years that followed French defeat in 1815, between 800,000 and 1,000,000 Irish set out across the Atlantic. This was almost double the number who had undertaken the same journey over the preceding two centuries.[8] The majority had come in the years between 1835-44, a decade that accounted for half of all Irish emigrants between 1815-45, with the influx peaking at

[4] Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 51-52.
[5] Lawrence John McCaffrey, *The Irish Diaspora in America* (original 1976, reprinted Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1984), 60.
[6] Kenny, *American Irish*, 45.
[7] David Noel Doyle, "The Remaking of Irish-America, 1845-80" in W.E. Vaughan (ed), *A New History of Ireland VI: Ireland under the Union: 1870-1921*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 728-729.
[8] Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 193.

90,000 in 1842 alone.[9] Many Irish Americans who would serve the Union in the coming conflict could trace their origins to this pre-Famine migration. However, the majority of future Yankees arrived in North America after the momentous events of 1845, the year that the fungus *Phytophthora Infestans* first made landfall on Irish shores.

The potato blight which was to so influence Irish emigration to America had itself originated in the New World. Arriving in Europe in 1845, it was first confirmed in Ireland in September that year.[10] Disastrously, the blight returned in even greater force in 1846, and would continue to impact the crop well into the 1850s. It was the sustained nature of the crisis, coupled with the lacklustre government response, that proved so catastrophic. By the time the worst was over in 1852 some one million were dead, around one in eight of the pre-Famine population. The distress the Famine visited upon the island compelled large numbers of Irish to consider what many regarded as the only viable option—emigration.

The exodus from Ireland that the Famine instigated was unparalleled in Irish history. Between 1845 and 1855 almost 1.5 million Irish left for the United States alone, with more than 2 million finding a new life overseas—almost a quarter of the island's pre-Famine population.[11] As many as a third of all these Famine-era emigrants were native Irish speakers.[12] The transformative impact of the Famine has been aptly characterised by historian Kerby Miller as a time when "an entire generation virtually disappeared from the land...only one out of three Irishmen born about 1831 died at home of old age—in Munster only one out of four."[13] As the figures suggest, the great majority of

[9] Kenny, *American Irish*, 46.
[10] Christine Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-52* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2006), 31-32.
[11] Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 291.
[12] Kerby A. Miller, ""Revenge for Skibbereen" Irish Emigration and the Meaning of the Great Famine" in Arthur Gribben (ed), *The Great Famine and the Irish Diaspora in America*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 183.
[13] Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 291.

Famine-era emigrants held the United States as their preferred destination. Every year between 1847 and 1854 over 100,000 Irish flooded into American ports, with still more making their way to what they hoped would prove the Promised Land via Canada.[14]

Though the number of Irish arrivals abated somewhat from 1855 onwards, the figures nonetheless remained impressive. Between 1856 and 1860 almost 250,000 more Irish landed in the United States, an annual average of nearly 50,000.[15] Adverse events in America did have a demonstrable impact on Irish emigration; the financial Panic of 1857 saw Irish numbers drop to 31,500 in 1858, while the coming of the American Civil War saw the 1861-62 average fall to less than 31,000.[16] However, emigration surged again in 1863-64, when poor economic conditions at home combined with strong monetary inducements to serve the war economy and/or enlist in the Union military to see the arrival of more than 94,000 Irish in each of those years.[17]

The Irish-born emigrants impacted by the American Civil War had arrived from a country that was overwhelmingly rural in its makeup. Of an 1841 population of just over eight million people, less than 14 percent had inhabited towns of 2,000 or more, and 75 percent of all males had worked the land.[18] The agricultural society they had left behind was a stratified one, with large landowners, often gentry, forming the apex of the pyramid. Below them were groups variously classified as strong farmers (tenants holding 30 acres plus), middling farmers (10-30 acres), smallholders (2-9 acres), joint tenants (those who held land in common with others) and finally—at the bottom—landless labourers.[19]

[14] Doyle, "The Remaking of Irish-America", 730.
[15] Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 347.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Kenny, *American Irish*, 48.
[19] Ibid.

Irish emigration in the years prior to the Famine was dominated by single men, most often drawn from the ranks of groups such as the middling farmers, smallholders, and artisans. During the 1830s, these male emigrants outnumbered females by a factor of two-to-one.[20] No matter your position in Irish society, passage to the United States was something which required means. As a result, while the majority of emigrants were poor by American standards, they were not among the poorest in Ireland, who could not afford the passage—though analysis suggests that those who could afford to depart were not necessarily better educated or more able than those who could not.[21] The coming of Famine significantly reduced the already precarious financial condition of those crossing the Atlantic, but the very poorest still struggled to escape the catastrophic conditions in Ireland– or could make it only as far as Britain. Nevertheless, the Irish who washed up on America's shores during the Famine were significantly worse off both in terms of finance and skills than those who had gone before.[22] The Famine also impacted the demographics of those who were choosing to leave Ireland, with an increase in the number of female emigrants and family groups. The typical arrival from the period was likely to identify as a labourer (if male) or servant (if female) and be aged between 20 and 45.[23] Many of the males—particularly those who arrived as children, teenagers and young adults—would be of prime military age by the time of the American Civil War.

[20] Kenny, *American Irish*, 50, 99; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 195-201.
[21] For a discussion of how age-heaping analysis of emigrants between 1841 and 1851 suggests the outflow did not constitute a "brain-drain", see Joel Mokyr and Cormac Ó Gráda, "Emigration and Poverty in Prefamine Ireland", *Explorations in Economic History* 19:4 (1982): 375-377.
[22] There were also *c.* 50,000 "assisted emigrants" who crossed the Atlantic during this period, see Miller, "Revenge for Skibbereen", 182.
[23] Kenny, *American Irish*, 99.

1.2 The Antebellum Demographics of Irish America

Although the majority of Irish immigrants were from rural backgrounds, once they arrived in the United States they congregated in towns and cities, becoming, in the analysis of historian David Doyle, "urban pioneers."[24] By 1860 almost 44 percent of all Irish-born immigrants lived in major cities with populations in excess of 20,000, and even those living in rural counties were most commonly there to work in industries such as mining and milling.[25] While most remained in relative poverty, tied to lives as labourers, servants or semi-skilled workers, this was not the only experience, and the Irish could be found at almost every social level within America's urban landscape.[26]

Table 1. American cities with populations of over 10,000 Irish-born in 1860, ordered by size of Irish-born populace. Adapted from Kennedy, Population of the United States in 1860, xxxi-xxxii.

CITY	STATE	NO. IRISH-BORN	TOTAL POPULATION	% CITY FOREIGN BORN	% CITY IRISH-BORN
New York	New York	203740	805651	47.62%	25.29%
Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	95548	585529	28.93%	16.32%
Brooklyn	New York	56710	266661	39.22%	21.27%
Boston	Massachusetts	45991	177812	35.88%	25.86%
St. Louis	Missouri	29926	160773	59.76%	18.61%
New Orleans	Louisiana	24398	168675	38.31%	14.46%
Chicago	Illinois	19889	109260	49.99%	18.20%

[24] David Noel Doyle, "The Irish as Urban Pioneers in the United States, 1850-1870", *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10:1/2 (1990).
[25] Doyle's precise figure is 705,218 (43.77 percent of Irish-born in 1860) who lived in one of the 43 largest cities. See Doyle, "The Irish as Urban Pioneers", 41-42, 48.
[26] Doyle, "The Remaking of Irish-America", 726.

Table 1. (Continued).

Cincinnati	Ohio	19375	161044	45.71%	12.03%
Baltimore	Maryland	15536	212418	24.71%	7.31%
Albany	New York	14780	62367	34.66%	23.70%
Newark	New Jersey	11167	71914	37.02%	15.53%

By 1861, largely urban Irish communities of various sizes had established themselves across the states from which the majority of Union forces would be drawn. Some had started to take shape even before the Famine migration, particularly in cities like New York, where areas like the Sixth Ward had begun to develop an Irish character by the 1820s.[27] However, it was the influx after 1845 that had the most impact. By 1860 many northern cities accommodated colossal numbers of Irish-born immigrants; Boston in excess of 45,000, Brooklyn in excess of 56,000, Philadelphia in excess of 95,000 (Table 1).[28] Even more telling were the proportionate figures. In many cities one in every five of the total populace—in some one in every four—were Irish-born (Table 2). By far the most significant Irish enclave in the United States at the outbreak of the American Civil War was New York. The Empire City was home to more than 200,000 Irish-born in 1860; 25 percent of the city's total population and more than double the size of the next largest Irish population in Philadelphia.[29] Indeed, the Irish-born of New York City accounted for 13 percent of all Irish immigrants in the United States.[30] When considered in conjunction with the Irish-populations of the then separate city of Brooklyn and the

[27] Paul A. Gilje, "The Development of an Irish American Community in New York City before the Great Migration" in Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (eds), *The New York Irish* (Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 75-76.

[28] Joseph Camp Griffith Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1864), xxxi-xxxii.

[29] The largest 1860 Irish populations were New York with 203,740; Philadelphia with 95,548; Brooklyn with 56,710; Boston with 45,991 and St. Louis with 29,926. See Table 1.

[30] Hasia R. Diner, ""The Most Irish City in the Union": The Era of the Great Migration, 1844-1877" in Bayor and Meagher (eds) *The New York Irish*, 92.

adjacent communities in New Jersey, the dominance of the New York region as the heartland of 1860s Irish America is apparent. When war came, it was this area that sent far and away the most Irish Americans to the front.

Table 2. American cities of over 20,000 where the Irish-born proportion of total population was in excess of 15 percent in 1860, ordered by percentage of Irish-born populace. Adapted from Kennedy, Population of the United States in 1860, xxxi-xxxii.

CITY	STATE	NO. IRISH-BORN	TOTAL POPULATION	% CITY FOREIGN BORN	% CITY IRISH-BORN
Boston	Massachusetts	45991	177812	35.88%	25.86%
Lowell	Massachusetts	9460	36827	32.87%	25.69%
New York	New York	203740	805651	47.62%	25.29%
Jersey City	New Jersey	7380	29226	39.11%	25.25%
Roxbury	Massachusetts	6191	25137	36.28%	24.63%
Troy	New York	9540	39232	34.31%	24.32%
Albany	New York	14780	62367	34.66%	23.70%
Hartford	Connecticut	6432	29154	30.09%	22.06%
Brooklyn	New York	56710	266661	39.22%	21.27%
Manchester	New Hampshire	3976	20109	27.25%	19.77%
Worcester	Massachusetts	4737	24960	24.81%	18.98%
Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	9297	49217	36.10%	18.89%
Providence	Rhode Island	9534	50666	24.80%	18.82%
New Haven	Connecticut	7391	39267	27.10%	18.82%
St. Louis	Missouri	29926	160773	59.76%	18.61%
Memphis	Tennessee	4159	22623	30.66%	18.38%
Chicago	Illinois	19889	109260	49.99%	18.20%
Cambridge	Massachusetts	4558	26060	24.20%	17.49%

Table 2. (Continued).

San Francisco	California	9363	56802	50.09%	16.48%
Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	95548	585529	28.93	16.32%
Newark	New Jersey	11167	71914	37.02%	15.53%
Salem	Massachusetts	3421	22252	19.44%	15.37%

The Irish tendency to congregate in specific urban wards served to further enhance the extreme Irish character of many districts within the North's cities and complicated their integration into the wider United States. These were often also the poorest areas, dominated by slums—locations such as the Five Points in New York, Moyamensing in Philadelphia and the North End and Fort Hill in Boston.[31] Life for the Irish poor in these districts was unquestionably tough. They were over-represented in the criminal justice system, apparently suffered from illness more frequently, and were susceptible to dying at higher rates than other groups.[32] For example, while the Irish-born accounted for almost 54 percent of New York City's foreign-born population in 1855, they made up 85 percent of the foreign-born patients in Bellevue Hospital.[33] The inevitable result of this reality was that Irish immigrants became intrinsically linked in the minds of many native-born white Americans with poverty and slums.

[31] Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points: The 19th-Century New York City Neighborhood That Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World's Most Notorious Slum* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 91-97; Dennis Clark, *The Irish in Philadelphia: Ten Generations of Urban Experience* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973), 41; Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1979), 94.

[32] Cormac Ó Gráda, "The New York Irish in the 1850s: Locked in by Poverty?" *New York Irish History* 19 (2005) 10; Alan M. Kraut, "Illness and Medical Care among Irish Immigrants in Antebellum New York" in Bayor and Meagher (eds) *The New York Irish*, 158-159; Doyle, "The Remaking of Irish-America", 747; Clark, *Irish in Philadelphia*, 49.

[33] Kraut, "Illness and Medical Care", 159-160.

Although the bulk of the Irish made their homes in the industrialised cities of the North Atlantic seaboard, there were also sizable populations to be found in the major population centres of the Midwest, particularly St. Louis, Chicago and Cincinnati. By 1850 there were in the region of 150,000 Irish-born living in the Midwest, again mainly in major urban centres.[34] Some Irish did break free from these built-up areas to make their homes in rural America, but even here the Atlantic seaboard dominated, with the most significant Irish rural populations centred around New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts.[35]

On the eve of the Civil War, the Irish-born in cities like New York were more likely to be single than either Germans or native-born whites, and Irish-born women were more likely to be part of the workforce.[36] Analysis of the 1860 Census IPUMS microdata by historian Cormac Ó Gráda suggests that by this point there appears to have been significantly more Irish women in the United States than men, at least in the major cities. This female dominance is particularly pertinent when assessing the proportionate scale of Irish American military representation from northern cities, given that up to 60.9 percent of the Irish-born population of New York City may have been female, a figure that stood at 58.4 percent in Philadelphia and 51.1 percent in Boston.[37]

The Irish American communities which these men and women joined and formed were extremely cohesive. When the Irish married, they overwhelmingly chose fellow Irish immigrants. In the mid-1850s, up to 90 percent of Irish-born women could expect

[34] Dennis Clark, *Hibernia America: The Irish and Regional Cultures* (New York & London: Greenwood Press, 1986), 119.
[35] Doyle, "Irish as Urban Pioneers", 48.
[36] Ó Gráda, " Locked in by Poverty?", 7.
[37] Ibid. IPUMS is the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, made up of high precision samples of the Federal Census.

to wed an Irish spouse.[38] Irish men who married had usually done so by the time they turned 28 or 29. Detailed analysis of the Irish in Buffalo in 1855 found that young men tended to leave home between the ages of 19 and 25, but they remained firmly embedded within the fabric of their Irish communities. They usually became boarders in the homes of other Irish families, a pattern of "ethnic exclusivity" that has also been identified in other Irish American communities, such as those of Pennsylvania's anthracite coal region.[39] These immigrant men were less likely to own property than native-born whites, a symptom of their more precarious occupational profile.[40] Though many Irish-born men worked in unskilled positions, the degree to which this was the case is sometimes overstated. Nonetheless, they had the most limited prospects for upward mobility of any immigrant group.[41] By the time of the 1855 census in New York City some 27,000 Irish-born men were employed as skilled and semi-skilled artisans—51 percent of the Irish-born male workforce.[42] Among the trades they dominated were the city's blacksmiths, plumbers, coopers, glassworkers, brass and coppersmiths.[43] Still, labouring was the primary occupation for most. Handlin's analysis of the Boston Irish in 1850 found that 48 percent of the working population were labourers.[44] Labouring also dominated in 1860 Philadelphia, where it led the

[38] Based on analysis of the Irish in Buffalo in 1855, which found that 85 percent of women could expect to marry, with 90 percent wedding an Irish-born spouse. See Doyle, "The Remaking of Irish-America", 756.

[39] Laurence A. Glasco, "The Life Cycles and Household Structure of American Ethnic Groups: Irish, Germans and Native-Born Whites in Buffalo, New York, 1855", *Journal of Urban History* 1:3 (1975), 348; Kevin Kenny, *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 54-55.

[40] Glasco, "Life Cycles", 345-347.

[41] For analysis of Irish upward (and downward) mobility in comparison to other contemporary immigrant groups, see Joseph P. Ferrie, "The Entry into the U.S. Labor Market of Antebellum European Immigrants, 1840–1860", *Explorations in Economic History* 34:3 (1997); Joseph P. Ferrie, *Yankeys Now: Immigrants in the Antebellum United States, 1840-1860* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 87-92.

[42] Doyle, "The Remaking of Irish-America", 753.

[43] Doyle, "The Remaking of Irish-America", 754.

[44] Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants*, 57, Table XV.

occupations of weaver and tailor as the most common Irish-born male pursuit.[45] There were already distinct signs of the inter-generational upward mobility that many Irish American families aspired towards. In 1855 Buffalo, Irish-born men in their twenties were considerably less likely to be labourers than older pre-Famine immigrants.[46] Nonetheless, as an overwhelmingly urban working-class population, progress was often slow and rarely linear. It is no surprise that many Irish-born men faced the prospect of working well into their seventies to keep bread on the table.[47] The forms of employment the Irish could secure were often short-term and precarious, while the areas of the economy they operated within were particularly vulnerable during financial downturns. Significantly, as the American Civil War loomed, just such downturns arrived; first in 1857, when some 100,000 people lost their jobs in New York City and Brooklyn, and again in 1860-1.[48]

Though the Irish in the United States tended to live in large numbers together, this does not mean that they necessarily formed a single monolithic group. Those from different parts of Ireland often gravitated towards different cities; for example Philadelphia proved attractive for many north-east and north-west Ulster immigrants, while 20 percent of the entire populations of Meath and Cavan at the time of the Famine made for New York.[49] The regional and community identities and affiliations that

[45] Clark, *Irish in Philadelphia,* 76.

[46] This was demonstrated in Glasco's analysis of 1855 populations in Buffalo. See Doyle, "The Remaking of Irish-America", 756.

[47] Analysis of the Irish in Buffalo in 1855 found that Irish boys tended to start work at 17, a year later than native-born boys, but that a third of Irish men still listed occupations into their seventies, compared with 14 percent of native-born men. Glasco, "Life Cycles", 348. The widows and dependents pension files suggest that 17 was late, and that at least part-time employment from the early teens onwards was commonplace.

[48] For the figures from the Panic of 1857, see Glatthaar, "A Tale of Two Armies", 330.

[49] Anbinder and Hope have analysed the county of origin of 18,000 Irish passengers to New York. Though coastal counties sent the most people, a block of counties from south Ulster to north Munster sent the highest proportion of their populations. See Tyler Anbinder and Hope McCaffrey, "Which Irish Men and Women Immigrated to the United States During the Great Famine Migration of 1846-54?", *Irish Historical Studies* 39:156 (2015), 632.

immigrants carried with them to America could also endure within major Irish enclaves. For example, in Manhattan's Five Points district of the Sixth Ward in 1860, 84 percent of Kerry immigrants confined themselves to just two of the neighbourhood's twenty blocks.[50] Similarly, many Cork people elected to make their homes together in New York's Seventh Ward. Established by the late 1830s, the area would become known as the "Cork Ward."[51] Even where those from the same locality in Ireland did not overtly gather together in adjacent buildings or streets, the existence of familial and regional ties in Irish American communities was an almost inevitable consequence of the process of chain migration, which engendered both constant contact with– and continuous new arrivals from– the "Old Country."[52] That this occurred is evidenced by the scale of financial remittances to Ireland, much of it to enable passage to be purchased by those at home. Between 1850 and 1855 alone, an average of more than £1.2 million a year was being sent back across the Atlantic.[53] As will become evident, chain migration and financial remittances remained central to the lives of many Irish Americans even after they had marched off to war.

1.3 Antebellum Irish American Society

The exponential growth of the Irish presence in the antebellum United States produced profound change and profound challenges for Irish and native alike. These were nowhere more noticeable than in the spheres of religion, politics and race. For the Catholic Church, the influx of Famine-era migrants irrevocably altered both its size and

[50] Anbinder, *Five Points*, 98; For a discussion of why many of these county and region based enclaves may not have left a greater mark on the historical record, see John T. Ridge, "Irish County Colonies in New York City, Part 2", *New York Irish History* 26 (2012).
[51] Ridge, "Irish County Colonies in New York City, Part 1" *New York Irish History* 25 (2011), 58.
[52] Doyle, "The Remaking of Irish-America", 726.
[53] Kerby A. Miller, "Emigration to North America in the Era of the Great Famine, 1845-55" in John Crowley, William J. Smyth, and Mike Murphy (eds) *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2012), 215.

makeup. Prior to 1844 New York City had eleven Catholic churches which catered to Irish parishioners; by 1863 a further thirteen had been added in an effort to meet the needs of the swelling Irish immigrant community in the city.[54] Across the United States as a whole, the Catholic population soared from 663,000 in 1840 to 3,103,000 in 1860, an increase driven by Irish (and German) immigration.[55] This formed part of a process that saw the American Catholic Church becoming increasingly Irish in character, so much so that by the 1860s it was, in the words of one historian, "the most distinctively 'Irish' institution outside Ireland."[56] Unsurprisingly, the waves of Catholic emigrants in the late 1840s and 1850s also had the consequence of irrevocably intertwining Irish American identity with Catholicism, largely at the expense of Irish American Protestants, a factor which contributed towards the continued divergence of the two groups during this period.

This period also bore witness to a sustained effort on the part of the Catholic Church in Ireland and America to improve the somewhat lacklustre devotional and sacramental performance of their Irish flock. Irish emigrants of the 1840s had left a country with an extremely low ratio of priests to the population, which suffered from a lack of churches (baptism and marriage ceremonies were often carried out in private homes), and where only around 40 percent of the pre-Famine population attended mass.[57] The "devotional revolution" embarked upon by the Church on both sides of the Atlantic accelerated as a result of the Famine, transforming Irish Catholic worship and ensuring that practicing

[54] Diner, "The Most Irish City in the Union", 103. These are just the Catholic churches that served largely Irish communities. Prior to 1844 there were 14 in total (one for French, two for German), with 19 added by 1863 (six catering to Germans).
[55] Kenny, *American Irish*, 113.
[56] Doyle, "The Remaking of Irish-America", 726.
[57] In 1840, there were only some 2,150 priests in Ireland to cater to a Catholic population of 6,500,000. From that date on the Church moved to increase numbers, with the proportionality greatly improving as a result of the Famine. See Emmet Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-75", *The American Historical Review* 77:3 (1972): 627, 635-636. Attendance at Sunday Mass in New York City during the 1840s also rarely exceeded 40 percent, see Kenny, *American Irish*, 113.

Catholicism became a core element of "Irish" identity.[58] As part of this, the Church had particularly concentrated on increasing rates of confession and communion (which had usually only been focused on during Easter in pre-Famine Ireland), on promoting devotions such as the rosary, and on the use of devotional aids like scapulars, catechisms and *Agnus Dei*.[59] These efforts proved extremely successful; by 1861 it had become imprinted to such a degree that thousands of young Irish American men regarded devotions as fundamental to their religious engagement.[60]

The numbers of Irish immigrants arriving on American shores, combined with their relative poverty and the fact the vast majority were Catholic, provoked an almost inevitable nativist reaction.[61] Though anti-Irish sentiment had been prevalent prior to the Famine migration—Irish Catholics had been attacked in Philadelphia, Richmond and Charleston in 1844 and 1845 for example—the late 1840s and early 1850s saw nativism intensify.[62] Many native-born white Americans were concerned that these new migrants would change the face of the United States, viewing the Catholic religion and the competing allegiance its followers owed to the Pope in Rome as a threat to their vision of the American Republic. So it was that only a few years prior to the outbreak of the Civil War Irish immigrants were forced to face their greatest nativist threat. It came in the form of the Order of the Star Spangled Banner, commonly referred to as the Know Nothing party or the American party. Emerging in the wake of the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act, it attracted members who tended to hold anti-slavery sentiments, but

[58] Doyle, "The Remaking of Irish-America", 725-726.
[59] Larkin, "Devotional Revolution", 644-645, 649.
[60] For the most comprehensive analysis of the Catholic Church during the American Civil War, see William B. Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union: How the Civil War Created a Separate Catholic America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[61] For a discussion of how native-born white Americans viewed the Irish in the antebellum United States, which places the discussion in the wider landscape of emerging American identity, see Dale T. Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic: Ethnicity and Nationality in Antebellum America* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1986).
[62] Kenny, *American Irish*, 115.

were also anti-immigrant and, particularly in the northern states, strongly anti-Catholic.[63] It was no coincidence that among their early political successes were the capture of the mayoralties of Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago, all cities with sizable Irish populations.[64] Though their period in the American spotlight was brief and their political power had waned irretrievably by 1860, nativist sentiment was still a major fact of life for Irish Catholic immigrants during the American Civil War. By the late 1850s many former Know Nothings had joined the new Republican Party, contributing towards the Irish distrust of those who supported that political organisation—including Abraham Lincoln.

The Irish were far from passive in the face of the opposition they faced, and indeed it was their growing political influence that caused some of the greatest concern to nativists. The bulk of the Catholic Irish population in the United States were faithful adherents to the Democratic Party. The Whigs—and later the Republicans—were seen by many Irish Americans as promoting a culturally Protestant agenda, as being suspicious of immigrants and of seeking to place strictures and controls on activities such as school education and alcohol consumption. In contrast, the Democrats had come to recognise the potential voting power of groups like the Irish and actively pursued their support. In the years prior to the Civil War, they cultivated the Irish vote in cities like New York by appealing to them on issues such as culture, class and civil liberties, and particularly through the positions they ultimately adopted on issues important to the Irish working class.[65] The political machine that the Irish began constructing in the antebellum period was fundamentally linked to the fabric of the communities they had

[63] Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), xiii-xiv.
[64] Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery,* ix.
[65] Amy Bridges, *A City in the Republic: Antebellum New York and the Origins of Machine Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 99-101.

built. At its heart were locations such as saloons and grocery shops, which served as vital political gathering points, while employment within fire companies or in police departments often served as initial staging posts for the politically ambitious.[66] As historian Hasia Diner points out, this loyalty to the Democrats did not mean that the Irish were entirely homoegenous within the party, and they often aligned themselves to different factions.[67] In some instances this factionalisation was carried into the Civil War. An example of this can be seen in the 40th "Mozart" and 42nd "Tammany" New York Infantry Regiments—both of which proved highly attractive to Irish Americans—which were affliliated with the rival Mozart Hall and Tammany Hall organisations.

Another of the major characteristics of Catholic, Democratic Irish America was their position on the issue of slavery and attitude towards African Americans. There has been a significant amount of work carried out in the United States seeking to ascertain why Irish Americans in the North held such strongly anti-black views. Scholars such as Noel Ignatiev argue it came in response to anti-Irish racial discrimination, which caused Irish immigrants to feel a need to prove themselves by "becoming white" at the expense of African Americans. Others such as David Roediger see it in more practical terms, as an issue that was primarily inflamed by circumstance and perceived economic threats.[68]

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[66] Though some Irish had advanced in the Democratic leadership of organisations like Tammany Hall by the outbreak of the war, for the most part their heyday was still to come, and the majority of Irish served as "foot soldiers". See Timothy J. Meagher, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*, Columbia Guides to American History and Cultures (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 88-89; Tyler Anbinder, ""We Will Dirk Every Mother's Son of You": Five Points and the Irish Conquest of New York Politics" in Kevin Kenny (ed) *New Directions in Irish-American History*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 106-108. For a discussion of the history of Tammany Hall, see Terry Golway, *Machine Made: Tammany Hall and the Creation of Modern American Politics* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2014).

[67] Diner, ""The Most Irish City in the Union", 101-102.

[68] See Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York & London: Routledge, 1995), 2-3; David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, revised edition (London & New York: Verso, 2007), 133-163.

As will be discussed in Chapter Four, this is a debate towards which an analysis of Irish servicemen during the Civil War adds much fresh insight. The macro-level antebellum situation can broadly be summed up as follows. Like the political party to which they adhered, Irish Americans were solidly anti-abolition. Many Irish Americans viewed emancipationists as anti-Catholic (and by extension anti-Irish), felt they were more concerned with the welfare of the slave than with the appalling conditions of poor urban whites, and furthermore that they were willing to risk the future of the United States in pursuit of their radical agendas.[69] The Irish American political position was supported by the Catholic Church in the North, who opposed abolitionism. Though they preached of the evils of abusing slaves and of the slave trade itself, they defended the institution as legitimate, particularly as they judged enslaved African Americans to be significantly better off than those who remained free in Africa.[70] Irish Americans, many recently arrived from a country where they had enjoyed few rights, were also fervent believers in the sanctity of the American Constitution, which had provided them with the freedoms they enjoyed in the United States. Viewing that document as sacrosanct and intrinsic to the Republic, they passionately opposed abolitionists who sought to challenge the Constitution's enshrinement of slavery.[71]

At a more individual and practical level, Irish Americans undoubtedly saw African Americans as a labour threat, something that caused considerable animosity. Where perception became reality—such as when black workers were brought in to replace striking white stevedores in New York in 1855—violence soon followed.[72] For

[69]For a discussion of the history behind the anti-abolitionism of many Irish American nationalist leaders, and the influence of John Mitchel in particular on the opinions of ordinary Irish people towards abolitionists, see Ian Delahanty, "The Transatlantic Roots of Irish American Anti-Abolitionism, 1843–1859", *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 6:2 (2016), 164-192.

[70] Kenny, *American Irish*, 119.

[71] Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 43.

[72] Graham Hodges, ""Desirable Companions and Lovers" Irish and African Americans in the Sixth Ward, 1830-1870" in Bayor and Meagher (eds) *The New York Irish*, 108. It is worth noting that

working-class Irish Americans, the particularly virulent form of racism many practiced towards African Americans was likely driven by a combination of socio-economic competition (both real and imagined) combined with and an innate feeling of racial-superiority, something many probably held prior to their arrival in the United States.[73] These were views that many would ultimately carry with them into the Union military.

1.4 Defining the Irish American Serviceman

Men like Denis Horgan, whose story was told at the beginning of this chapter, have come to be regarded as the archetypal "Irish American" Civil War serviceman. A native of Ireland, he was both a recent immigrant and a Catholic, with economic imperatives that may have influenced his decision to enlist—a set of conditions that are often cited as reasons for a perceived under-representation and under-motivation of Irish Americans in the military. The veracity of these perceptions is tested in later chapters, but before doing so it is necessary to challenge this overly simplified characterisation and delineation of the Irish American in Union blue that has come to dominate Civil War history. To be sure, there were many who had very similar backstories to that of Denis Horgan—but there were many more who did not.

The most obvious deviation from the stereotypical Irish servicemen comes in the form of the thousands of Protestant Irish who fought for the Union. The overpowering

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this could work both ways. For example, it was the Irish who had initially supplanted the traditional labour opportunities of African Americans in New York as the former's numbers increased; See Kenny, *American Irish*, 62-63.

[73] For more on this, see Chapter Four. The necessity of adopting a transnational approach by exploring Irish attitudes to race within Ireland prior to emigration has been highlighted as a research need by scholars such as Kevin Kenny and Timothy Meagher. See Kenny, "Politics and Race: Editor's Introduction" in Kenny (ed) *New Directions in Irish-American History*, 103; Timothy J. Meagher, "From the World to the Village", 121; See also Catherine M. Eagan, ""White," If "Not Quite": Irish Whiteness in the Nineteenth-Century Irish-American Novel" in Kenny (ed) *New Directions in Irish-American History*. 140-155.

dominance of Irish Catholic immigration during the Famine-era has served to mask the story of Irish American Protestants during the same period. These men came from all over Ireland, but those from Ulster were by far the most numerous. Although Ulster Protestant immigration into the United States has traditionally been associated with the eighteenth century, historian Patrick Fitzgerald has demonstrated that the outflow of Protestants to America in the nineteenth century was many times greater in terms of real numbers.[74] Indeed, by the outbreak of the American Civil War there were more first and second generation Irish Protestants living in the United States than at any previous period in the nation's history, and large numbers of them answered Abraham Lincoln's call.

It is the exclusion of the second generation Irish, be they Protestant or Catholic, that has proved the most problematic with regards to defining Civil War Irish America, and by extension Irish American wartime service.[75] Historically, scholars have invariably employed nativity to delineate Irish American participation, particularly when endeavouring to assess the scale of the Irish community's military contribution. Yet within the context of Irish America, nativity is of extremely limited utility. It is rendered so by the practicalities of the Irish emigration experience and the demonstrable inter-generational ethnic cohesiveness of Irish migrant communities. This cohesiveness has been repeatedly demonstrated by historians of Irish America, as outlined earlier in this chapter. It is also one of the most striking aspects of the Civil War widows and dependents pension files. Time and again, applications relating to non-Irish-born ethnic soldiers and sailors overflow with evidence of their place within their Irish American

[74] While Ulster's emigration was over two per 1000 in the period 1680-1820, it was between 13 and 14 per 1000 between 1820 and 1890. A large proportion of these emigrants were Protestants. See Patrick Fitzgerald, "Mapping the Ulster Diaspora 1607-1960", *Familia* 22 (2006), 16.

[75] "Second Generation" in this context meaning the foreign-born children of Irish parents.

community. Before any broader discussion of Irish Americans in uniform can usefully be pursued, it is first necessary to establish a more refined impression of just what constituted an Irish American in 1861.

By 1860 the ethnic-Irish community extended significantly beyond the 1.6 million people of Irish nativity recorded on the census.[76] Tens of thousands of young men born into the tight-knit Irish communities of the United States in the 1830s and 1840s undoubtedly regarded themselves as distinctly Irish American.[77] They were further augmented by thousands more who had been born to Irish immigrant parents and into Irish communities in Britain and Canada. These latter cohort were products of the Irish tendency to step-migrate, with family groups regularly spending months, years or even decades in another country prior to proceeding on to the United States.[78] The scale of the antebellum Irish community in Britain was captured by the census, which recorded 415,000 Irish-born in 1841, a figure which had risen to 806,000 by 1861.[79] In Scotland alone, Irish-born individuals accounted for 4.8 percent of the population in 1841 and 7.2 percent by 1851.[80] As a result, there is no doubt that a considerable proportion of the 585,973 English, Scots and Welsh-born enumerated on the 1860 Federal Census were ethnically-Irish.[81] The ghostly traces of the contribution Britain's Irish communities

[76] The precise figure recorded for Irish-born in 1860 was 1,611,304. Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxviii.

[77] For a detailed discussion of this sense of identity, see Chapter Five.

[78] Much work remains to be done on long-term Irish step-migration from Britain to the United States in this period. One example is the analysis of Irish movement through South Wales en-route to America. See David Morris, "'Gone to Work to America": Irish Step-Migration through South Wales in the 1860s and 1870s", *Immigrants & Minorities* 34:3 (2016), 297-313.

[79] Graham Davis, "The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939" in Andy Bielenberg (ed) *The Irish Diaspora*, (Essex: Longman, 2000), 20.

[80] Richard B. McCready, "Revising the Irish in Scotland: The Irish in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Scotland" in Bielenberg (ed) *The Irish Diaspora*, 39. Analysis of Civil War dependent pensions relating to Scottish-born men by the author has revealed that those from the Irish community form a very distinct and substantial grouping.

[81] The 1860 Federal Census records 431,692 people as born in England, 108,518 born in Scotland, and 45,763 as born in Wales. See Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, xxviii. The service of ethnic Irishmen from these British communities is repeatedly seen in both the Civil

made towards Union manpower are observable in post-war American military pensions that were claimed in England and Scotland, a significant number of which were being paid to Irish families.[82] Precisely the same holds true for Canada. Aside from those who had step-migrated through or permanently settled in the Canadian provinces, many Irish Americans in states such as Maine and Michigan had family on both sides of the border, and regularly moved back and forth between the two countries. This insured that many of the 249,970 individuals of Canadian-birth making their homes in the United States by 1860 were also ethnically Irish, as were still more of those who crossed over the border during the war.[83] This has been recognised by historian Donald Akenson, who argues that a significant proportion of those whom we term "Irish American" at this period had come from Canada, and were of Canadian nativity.[84] By 1861, the scale of this largely invisible block of American, British and Canadian-born Irish had become highly significant. It has been postulated that they may have added as much as 50 percent to the ethnic Irish population of America's largest cities.[85]

Somewhat paradoxically, while historians of the Civil War era have tended to exclude ethnic men born outside Ireland from assessments of the scale of Irish American participation, the lack of source material has caused them to simultaneously include them when seeking out representative Irish voices.[86] This inconsistency proves

War pension files and the claims for U.S. pensions that were submitted from Britain during the post-war period.

[82] On the contribution of the Irish in Britain to the war, see e.g. Damian Shiels "The Forgotten County: Exploring the American Civil War Service of Britain's Irish Communities", *Irish in the American Civil War* (2015) https://irishamericancivilwar.com/2015/09/03/the-forgotten-county-exploring-the-american-civil-war-service-of-britains-irish-communities/, accessed 12 December 2019.

[83] Figures derived from Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860,* xxviii.

[84] Donald H. Akenson, "Irish Migration to North America, 1800-1920" in Bielenberg (ed) *The Irish Diaspora*, 125-126.

[85] Doyle, "The Irish as Urban Pioneers", 41-42. As Doyle notes, if true this would increase the 1860 Irish population in the leading 43 U.S. cities from 705,218 Irish-born to an ethnic Irish total of 1,057,827.

[86] An example of this can be seen in the work of James McPherson. In *Battle Cry of Freedom*, McPherson uses the United States Sanitary Commission nativity-based figure (discussed below)

particularly problematic given that as many as 70,000 men born outside Ireland to Irish parents ultimately entered the Union military.[87] Patently, the re-integration of these second-generation soldiers and sailors into our definition of what constitutes an "Irish American" during the Civil War is an essential prerequisite for understanding the ethnic Irish experience of the conflict.

On the eve of war, the military age population of Irish America had a lot in common. Their cultural background, cohesive communities and working-class status ensured that was the case. Most of them had originated from similar Irish backgrounds, shared the same faith, held a broadly comparable political outlook, and faced the same prejudices. As a result, they have largely been treated as a homogenous block. To be sure, all these factors played a vitally important role in forming their personalities, outlook and behaviour—but there was much more to them as individuals. Upwards of one in four Irish Americans who went on to Federal service had not even been born in Ireland—enough in itself to complicate perceptions of the "typical" Irish American. Even men of Irish nativity showed considerable divergence. Those who had immigrated before the Famine carried with them a different set of life experiences than those who arrived during and immediately after that great exodus. Likewise, those who landed in the midst of the conflict did not necessarily share the perspectives of those who had known life in the antebellum United States. The men who had first arrived in America as children had grown up in markedly different environments to those who stepped ashore as adults,

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to argue for under-representation of Irish Americans in service, yet in *For Cause and Comrades* uses the letters of Canadian-born Peter Welsh to discuss the Irish American experience– a soldier not counted as "Irish" in the Sanitary Commission's analysis. See James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 606; McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 113. As noted in the introduction, Welsh is frequently described as "Irish" and "Irish-born" in Civil War historiography despite his Canadian nativity. Among the other non-Irish-born men who are regularly utilised to describe the ethnic Irish experience are James Mulligan of the 23rd Illinois and Thomas Cahill of the 9th Connecticut, both of whom were born in America. See for example Keating, *Shades of Green*, 41, 178; Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*, 53.

[87] This figure is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

often just a handful of years behind them. They were the same, but different. All were Irish American, and all need to be included and considered in any analysis of Irish American service during the Civil War. When that war eventually came, the scale and breadth of their service was every bit as diverse as their individual stories.

Chapter Two

In Search of the Irish American Serviceman, 1861-1865

The decades long road to war and the clashes over slavery which led to it were punctuated by a number of bloody signposts, none more dramatic than John Brown's effort to incite a slave-rebellion at Harper's Ferry, Virginia in October 1859. Encapsulating the majority Irish opinion, New York's ethnic weekly the *Irish American* described Brown as a "fanatic" and "blood-stained bandit" whose radical abolitionist views were "antagonistic to the very existence of the Republic."[1] Brown's efforts at Harper's Ferry reached their denouement when a Marine detachment–commanded by a certain Colonel Robert E. Lee– crashed through the doors of the engine house where the raiders had barricaded themselves. Shots rang out as the Marines entered the building, and Irish immigrant soldier Luke Quinn crumpled to the ground, mortally wounded. His death is regarded by some as the first military fatality of the American Civil War. Luke Quinn would be the first of tens of thousands of Irish Americans to lose their lives in United States uniform in the years to come.[2]

Less than two years after Harper's Ferry, Confederate artillery opened the American Civil War by firing on the United States garrison in Fort Sumter, one of the defensive fortifications of Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. The bombardment began on 12 April 1861 and forced the surrender of Sumter the following day, apparently bringing to a relatively bloodless conclusion an action which had such profound repercussions. On the 14 April Private Daniel Hough from Co. Tipperary was working one of the Fort's

[1] *New York Irish American*, 10 December 1859.
[2] Damian Shiels, *The Irish in the American Civil War* (Dublin: The History Press Ireland, 2013), 27-29.

guns as the departing garrison fired a 100-gun salute in honour of the stars and stripes. As he rammed home a cartridge an errant spark ignited the charge, causing a premature explosion that ripped through him, his gun, and the remainder of the gun crew. Hough was one of six men caught in the blast, and the first of two to die from their injuries. He and his comrade–Skibbereen native Edward Gallway–gained the unwanted distinction of becoming the first official United States fatalities of the American Civil War. Of those six men who had been wounded, only one had been born in America. All the rest, including Hough and Gallway, were Irish.[3] The origins of those who died at Fort Sumter did not escape the attention of those still in Ireland, generating foreboding at the potential bloodletting to come. In what proved a prescient prediction, one Irish newspaper warned that the impending conflict "threatened as much sorrow, widowhood and affliction to the home of Ireland, as of America itself" foretelling that it would witness "the lives of her exiled children…offered in thousands."[4]

Just as traditional concepts of what constituted an Irish American serviceman need to be revised and expanded, it is necessary to significantly adjust the narrative regarding the scope and scale of their military service. When the war broke out, there was *c.* 1.5 million Irish-born spread across the states and territories that remained loyal.[5] This was a figure bolstered by hundreds of thousands more ethnic Irish who had been born outside Ireland. Historians have long under-estimated the total number of men that these Irish American communities sent into Federal service. Rather than the standard quoted figure of 150,000 Irish, the true figure for Irish American service stands closer to 250,000 men. And rather than being under-represented, Irish Americans served at or

[3] Shiels, *Irish in the American Civil War*, 34-35.
[4] *The Cork Examiner* 31 May 1861.
[5] David Gleeson identifies 84,763 Irish-born in the states that went on to form the Confederacy, with a further 94,585 in the border states which remained loyal, but who supplied troops to both sides in the conflict. See Gleeson, *Green and the Gray*, 8.

above their proportion of the population in the forces of the United States. In certain key cities—most notably and importantly New York City—they appear to have been significantly overrepresented. Though some served in the green flag units which have come to dominate perceptions of the Irish American war, the great majority of these quarter of a million soldiers and sailors did not. These men's ethnicity continues to consume almost all the attention paid to them, overwhelming discussion of other aspects of their identities and backgrounds. This has caused them to be overlooked for what they can reveal to us about one of the most understudied blocks of men in northern service—for the Irish are almost certainly the most readily identifiable representatives of the urban working-class whites who formed the backbone of forces such as the Army of the Potomac.

2.1 Irish Service: Distribution and Frequency

The Federal garrison at Fort Sumter in 1861 contained 86 soldiers. Of them, at least 38 had been born in Ireland, accounting for almost 44 percent of the total.[6] In contrast, just 23 had been born in the United States. This was a pattern replicated across the regular army. Of the slightly more than 14,500 professionals on the rolls in January 1861, almost 37 percent were Irish-born.[7] When ethnic men not born in Ireland are considered, it may be that closer to 50 percent of the United States Army was Irish American. The Irish dominated the pre-war regulars because it was a highly unattractive form of employment, and as a result it relied on those drawn from the poorer and less-

[6] National Park Service, "Fort Sumter's Garrison by Nationality", https://www.nps.gov/fosu/learn/historyculture/upload/FOSU-Garrison-by-Nationality.pdf, accessed 19 September 2012. These are figures for the military detachment only and do not include civilian workers and servants who were present at Fort Sumter.

[7] Mark W. Johnson, ""Where Are the Regulars?" An Analysis of Regular Army Recruiting and Enlistees, 1851-1865" (PhD: State University of New York at Albany, 2012), 150, 295.

skilled strata of American society, particularly immigrants. Three out of every five of these regular Irish soldiers enlisted from the Mid-Atlantic states– a third of them from New York alone– mirroring the patterns of Irish urban settlement in the United States. The scale of the Irish presence in the regulars was guaranteed by the army's concentration on the urban centres where they lived for their recruitment efforts.[8] The practice of using the army as an economic refuge was something Irish immigrants had brought with them to America. Back in Ireland, the early nineteenth century had witnessed the development of a service tradition that by 1830 saw more Irishmen than English serving in the British Army.[9] This trend continued despite the Famine migration and resultant fall off in population; the Irish proportion of the British military remained over 30 percent in 1868.[10] In America, the United States regulars proved a continuing attraction for the Irish through the period of the Civil War, as the professional branch of the Union military sought to expand to meet the Confederate threat. During the course of the conflict some 50,000 new recruits were taken into the regulars, and of them more than 20 percent have been estimated as Irish-born; again, significantly more would have been Irish American.[11]

As is discussed in further detail below, none of these regulars are included in the standard estimate of Irish American service. This is despite the fact that in practical terms, it was frequently the case that regular units were among the most "Irish" to take to the battlefields of the American Civil War. The professionals who fought in the vicinity of Gettysburg's Wheatfield serve to illustrate this point. While the actions of

[8] Johnson, "Where Are the Regulars?", 39-41, 207.
[9] The Irish-born constituted some 32.2 percent of the total number in the British Army at that date. See Edward M. Spiers, "Army Organisation and Society in the Nineteenth Century" in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (eds) *A Military History of Ireland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 335-336.
[10] Spiers, "Army Organisation", 337.
[11] Johnson, " Where Are the Regulars?", 2, 150, 295, 306.

the Irish Brigade understandably dominate memory of the Irish American contribution to the fighting in that sector on the second day, it is almost certain that more Irish Americans perished in Colonel Sidney Burbank's Second Brigade, Second Division of the Fifth Corps. The Irish Brigade went into the Wheatfield with just over 530 men, 32 of whom were killed or mortally wounded. Burbank's regulars entered the fight with a little over 900 men, losing 134 to mortal wounds. Analysis indicates that a minimum of 32 were Irish natives, and a number of others were certainly Irish American. Given that the Irish American character of Burbank's force was unlikely to have exceeded 50 percent, the regular's losses in the Wheatfield sector inflicted a greater real and proportionate loss on Irish America than those of the Irish Brigade.[12] The great majority of Irish American casualties in the four years of war were "hidden" in units such as these. They may not have had the same impact on politics, popular perception or memory as those sustained in ethnic regiments, but they brought very real suffering into the Irish American communities forced to endure them. The cumulative negative impact such widespread, sustained and repeated losses had on ethnically cohesive and tight-knit populations should not be underestimated.

While Irish American regulars may have been the first to taste action during the Civil War, they were followed closely by the other branch that most attracted Irish Americans– the navy. Irish American sailors were among the relief vessels that witnessed the firing on Fort Sumter on 12 April 1861, not the least of whom was Dubliner Stephen Rowan, Commander of USS *Pawnee* during that operation.[13]

[12] For detailed analysis see Damian Shiels "More Irish than the Irish: The Forgotten Irishmen of Gettysburg's Wheatfield", *Irish in the American Civil War* (2018), https://irishamericancivilwar.com/2018/04/02/more-irish-than-the-irish-the-forgotten-irishmen-of-gettysburgs-wheatfield, accessed 2 April 2018. Irish American casualties were also high in Colonel Hannibal Day's First Brigade of regulars.

[13] For more on Rowan see S.C. Ayres, *Sketch of the Life and Services of Vice Admiral Stephen C. Rowan, U.S. Navy, Read before the Ohio Commandery of the Loyal Legion, April 6, 1910* (Ohio: Ohio Commandery of the Loyal Legion, 1910).

Between 1861 and 1865 more than 118,000 men enlisted in the Union naval service, some 20 percent of whom are estimated to have been Irish-born.[14] As with the regulars, these men have been excluded from standard estimates of how many Irish Americans served during the war. The navy had many parallels with the regulars—it proved popular with the Irish working class, especially those who found employment difficult to come by; and as with the regulars, foreigners were over-represented among their pre-war ranks.[15] The navy also offered a distinct advantage over service in the army– it was perceived as less arduous and markedly safer. With the advent of the draft later in the war, naval enlistment offered an opportunity to escape forced service on the battlefield.[16] The navy also dangled the prospect of financial reward. Aside from their monthly pay the navy offered the potential of a share in prize money realised from captured vessels, and perhaps even more significantly, the service had a policy of providing salary advances of between two and three months pay to the often cash-strapped new recruits.[17]

When war came in 1861, among the first to answer the call to defend the union were those who had served in pre-war militia units. By far the most famous Irish American example was the 69th New York State Militia, which had achieved notoriety in 1860 when its colonel, Michael Corcoran, had refused to parade them on the occasion of the visit of the Prince of Wales. Although initially taking the field for ninety day's service, they would also see hard fighting later in the war as part of Corcoran's Irish Legion.[18] A

[14] Michael J. Bennett, *Union Jacks: Yankee Sailors in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 5, 9.
[15] Bennett, *Union Jacks*, 8-9.
[16] Bennett, *Union Jacks*, 15-17.
[17] Bennett, *Union Jacks*, 17-19.
[18] The history of the 69th New York State Militia and 69th New York National Guard Artillery is often confused with that of the 69th New York Volunteer Infantry, which was a separate unit. Recent research suggests that relatively few of the 69th New York State Militia chose to enter three-years service with the 69th New York Volunteers of Irish Brigade fame. See Christopher M. Garcia, "The Forgotten Sixty-Ninth: The Sixty-Ninth New York National Guard Artillery Regiment in the American Civil War" (MA: Old Dominion University, 2012).

number of other antebellum militia organisations formed the nucleus for ethnic volunteer companies and regiments, such as Boston's Columbian Artillery, whose membership was at the core of what became the 9th Massachusetts Volunteers. Disbanded during the nativist purge of foreign militia companies in 1855, the Columbians had survived by reorganising as a civic organisation.[19] Irish militia companies answered the call across the North. In Pennsylvania, patriotically named antebellum groups such as The Meagher Guards, The Hibernia Greens, The Shields Guards and the Emmett Guards came together to form companies in the 24th Pennsylvania Volunteers, the three-month antecedent of the Irish 69th Pennsylvania Volunteers.[20]

The great bulk of Irish American service during the Civil War was undertaken in the ranks of the state volunteers. The United States Sanitary Commission produced the most reliable estimates for how many Irish-born men entered such regiments, suggesting that a little under 145,000 volunteered in the East and Midwest.[21] The conflation of these volunteer estimates with total Irish American service lies at the root of the long-standing undercounting of Irish American participation in the Civil War. This conflation has had significant historiographical consequence, as it has led scholars such as James McPherson and J. Matthew Gallman to argue that the Irish (and other immigrants) were proportionately underrepresented in the United States military.[22] In turn, this has caused

[19] Christian G. Samito, "Introduction" in Daniel George Macnamara, *The History of the Ninth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry*, reprint edited by Christian G. Samito (Fordham University Press, 2000), xv-xvi.

[20] Don Ernsberger, *At the Wall: The 69th Pennsylvania "Irish Volunteers" at Gettysburg* (Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris, 2006), 11-12; Anthony W. McDermott, *Brief History of the 69th Regiment Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteers*, 5-6.

[21] Benjamin Apthorp Gould, *Investigations in the Military and Anthropological Statistics of American Soldiers* (New York: Hurd and Houghton for the U.S. Sanitary Commission, 1869), 27. The precise figure is 144,221.

[22] See McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 606; J. Matthew Gallman, *The North Fights the Civil War: The Home Front* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1994), 67. McPherson's assessment appears to be based on the volunteer figures devised for the United States Sanitary Commission. Gallman argues that immigrants made up 30 percent of the northern military-age population but

Civil War historians to seek explanations for this supposed under-representation. However, even an examination that restricts itself solely to volunteer service reveals no compelling evidence for the under-representation thesis. Table 3 reproduces the Sanitary Commission estimates for Irish-born white volunteers from Eastern and Midwestern states and compares them with nativity data from the 1860 census. While the use of the 1860 census figure does not account for wartime immigrants, the resultant percentages are still likely an underestimate. As noted in Chapter One, the populations in many of the urban locations—particularly New York City and Philadelphia—were dominated by females, and the Sanitary Commission numbers exclude the naval and regular enlistments which were heavily urban in character. Even with these mitigating factors, this evidence suggests that in the majority of cases the Irish-born served at or above their percentage proportion of the population.

composed only about a quarter of the men in the northern armies. This leads him to seek to ascertain why this apparent under-representation existed. McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom* has been particularly influential as a reference point for historians discussing immigrants in the Union military and is frequently cited as the source for statements regarding under-representation. For an example see Paul A. Cimbala, *Soldiers North and South: The Everyday Experiences of the Men Who Fought America's Civil War* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 65.

Table 3. United States Sanitary Commission figures for volunteers as a proportion of the Irish-born population in 1860, organised by size of Irish population.[23]

STATE	IRISH POP. (1860)	STATE POP. (1860)	IRISH AS % STATE POP.	NO. IRISH VOLUNTEERS (USSC)	NO. WHITE STATE VOLS (USSC)	IRISH AS % WHITE STATE VOLS
New York	498072	3831590	13.00%	51206	337800	15.16%
Pennsylvania	201939	2849259	7.09%	17418	271500	6.42%
Massachusetts	185434	1221432	15.18%	10007	105500	9.49%
Illinois	87573	1704291	5.14%	12041	216900	5.55%
Connecticut & Rhode Island[24]	80730	622153	12.98%	7657	54900	13.95%
Ohio	76826	2302808	3.34%	8129	259900	3.13%
New Jersey	62006	646699	9.59%	8880	59300	14.97%
Wisconsin	49961	773693	6.46%	3621	79500	4.56%
Missouri	43464	1063489	4.09%	4362	85400	5.11%
Michigan	30049	736142	4.08%	3278	72000	4.55%
Iowa	28072	673779	4.17%	1436	56600	2.54%
Maryland	24872	515918	4.82%	1400	27900	5.02%
Indiana	24495	1338710	1.83%	3472	156400	2.22%
Kentucky	22249	919484	2.42%	1303	43100	3.02%

[23] The table is an amalgam of Apthorp Gould's data from the Sanitary Commission and the nativity statistics from the 1860 Federal Census. In his report, Apthorp Gould went to some length to explain the significant obstacles he faced in attempting to establish nativity, due to the substantial gaps in the available information which forced him to extrapolate. These gaps impacted states with high Irish enlistment e.g. there was no nativity information for 104,391 of 337,800 white New York volunteers, for 139,132 of 271,500 white Pennsylvania volunteers, and 34,631 of 105,500 white Massachusetts volunteers. This calls into serious question the reliability of the overall figures, but they are, and will remain, the best available estimates. See Apthorp Gould, *Investigations,* 15-16, 25-26.

[24] The Sanitary Commission report presented the totals for these two states as a combined figure.

Table 3. (Continued).

Maine	15290	626947	2.44%	1971	54800	3.60%
Vermont	13480	314369	4.29%	1289	26800	4.81%
Minnesota	12831	169395	7.58%	1140	20000	5.70%
New Hampshire	12737	325579	3.91%	2699	27800	9.71%
District of Columbia	7258	60763	11.95%	698	12000	5.82%
Delaware	5832	90589	6.44%	582	10000	5.82%
Kansas	3888	106390	3.66%	1082	16800	6.44%

Of the twenty-one states and the District of Columbia for which comparable estimates are possible, the Irish-born made up 7.12 percent of the 1860 population, and provided an estimated 7.2 percent of the wartime volunteers.[25] When allowance is made for the excluded navy and regulars, the Irish-born demonstrably served in greater proportion than their percentage of the population. The data in Table 3 also suggests that Irish-born participation may not always have been uniform across different states. An example of this is Massachusetts, where the Irish-born represented 15.18 percent of the population but apparently furnished only 9.49 percent of white volunteers.[26] It is tempting to suggest that the depressed numbers were influenced by local Irish disenchantment following the hardships experienced during the Know Nothing rise of the 1850s. However, it may well be a result of difficulties with nativity data, anti-Irish bias in the

[25] The Irish-born population across the 22 states and Washington D.C. was enumerated at 1,487,058 in 1860, with the total population across the same regions 20,893,479. 143,671 of the 1,994,900 white volunteers were estimated as Irish-born.

[26] However, it should be noted that record sets such as the widows and dependent pension files and the compiled military service records do not seem to reflect this supposed under-representation, as both give the impression of large-scale Irish American service from Massachusetts. Massachusetts is also the only major outlier when comparing the relative percentages of identified correspondents with the Sanitary Commission figures—while 16.71% of the letter group were from men in Massachusetts service, only 6.94% of the Irish-born in the Commission's report were credited to there (see n100 below).

compilation of the figures, and/or the fact that a considerable number of early war Irish volunteers from Massachusetts served in units from outside of the state, most particularly in New York. Conversely, while the Irish-born accounted for just 3.91 percent of New Hampshire's population in 1860, they accounted for 9.71 percent of that state's white volunteers, perhaps an indication of the financial inducements on offer to those willing to serve in the state's units during the later war years. By far the most significant figure is that for New York, given it was the state that by some distance furnished the most Irish-born men for the war effort. The figures suggest that, despite incidents such as the Draft Riots, the Irish were disproportionately represented among state troops, furnishing 15.16 percent of white volunteers while accounting for 13 percent of the 1860 population.

The distribution of Irish-born volunteers—and by extension Irish American volunteers—largely conformed to their pre-war distribution across the northern states. As is apparent, nowhere could rival New York for its distinctly Irish American character. Whenever a regiment raised in an urban part of that state suffered on the battlefield, it was usually a bad day for New York's Irish communities. These concentrations of Irish American servicemen in the Mid-Atlantic and New England states also had a knock-on impact on where most of them fought their war. Irish Americans were significantly more concentrated in the forces that operated in the Eastern Theater, such as the Army of the Potomac, than they were in the armies of the West.

Understandably, the story of Irish American service during the Civil War has been overwhelmingly focused on the activities of these volunteers, and most particularly on the two- and three-year volunteer regiments that adopted an ethnic Irish character. The mantle of the most famed formation of the war, then as now, was worn by the Irish

Brigade. Unquestionably the most important Irish unit to see service, the Brigade was a lightning rod for attention during the conflict. Thomas Francis Meagher received authorisation to form the Irish Brigade in August 1861, and went on to serve as its first Brigadier-General.[27] Initially consisting of the 63rd, 69th and 88th New York Volunteers, it was later joined in the field by the 28th Massachusetts Volunteers and 116th Pennsylvania Volunteers, although the latter regiment was less ethnically Irish American than the others, and did not carry a green flag into battle.[28] During the first years of the conflict the Irish Brigade earned a reputation for hard fighting, something borne out by its casualty figures; although fewer than 3,000 men took the field at any one time, it sustained more than 4,000 casualties during the course of the war.[29] Given its contemporary position as the preeminent expression of Irish loyalty to the Union, it is unsurprising that the devastating losses it sustained also impacted wider Irish enthusiasm for the war on the home front.[30] The most spectacular example of this came with the impact and fallout of the Brigade's fate at Fredericksburg, which affected both contemporary Irish American opinion on the war and caused the battle to become indelibly linked to memory of Irish American participation.[31]

The Irish Brigade has significantly overshadowed the only other brigade level ethnic Irish formation of the war, Corcoran's Irish Legion. Raised and led by Michael Corcoran in August 1862, it consisted of the 155th, 164th, 170th and 182nd (69th New York National Guard Artillery) New York Volunteers. [32] Noted for its Fenian links,

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[27] Conyngham, *The Irish Brigade,* reprint edited by Kohl, 50.
[28] The 29th Massachusetts Infantry, a non-Irish unit, was also briefly brigaded with the New York regiments, and fought with them at Antietam.
[29] Kohl, "Introduction" in Conyngham, *The Irish Brigade*, reprint edited by Kohl, x.
[30] For discussion of the impact of Irish losses in 1862 and how they combined with the Emancipation Proclamation to contribute to a growing Irish disenchantment with the war see e.g. Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 81-82.
[31] For the importance of Fredericksburg in Irish memory of the war, see Craig A. Warren, ""Oh, God, What a Pity!": The Irish Brigade at Fredericksburg and the Creation of Myth", *Civil War History* 47:3 (2001), 193-221.
[32] For the most detailed discussion of the Legion, see Garcia, "The Forgotten Sixty-Ninth".

many of the men in the Legion had eschewed enlistment in the Irish Brigade in order to wait for the release of their much loved leader from Confederate prison. Corcoran, who had been captured while leading the 69th New York State Militia at Bull Run, had been held for potential reciprocal execution if the North carried out a threat to execute Confederate privateers. He died while serving as Brigadier-General following a fall from his horse in December 1863. Up to that point the Legion had escaped the worst of the war, but that changed with their transfer to the Army of the Potomac in 1864, and they suffered considerable casualties during the Overland Campaign and around Petersburg.

The majority of ethnic Irish regiments served outside of these two brigade formations, marching to the guns as individual representatives of their ethnicity. Across the loyal states in 1861 and 1862 Irish communities sought to explicitly signpost their dedication to union by sending an ethnic unit into the field. While many successfully established Irish American "green flag" regiments, others were forced to dilute the ethnic make-up of their outfit in order to reach the requisite numbers or abandon the effort altogether. As a result not all the ethnic regiments that were mustered in were completely Irish in character, something that could create friction, particularly where ethnic delineations occurred along company lines. Pride in identity was not the exclusive purview of Irish American troops; for example, when two native white American companies from Cattaraugus County were joined with the ethnic 37th New York "Irish Rifles", tensions quickly manifested between the two groups.[33]

No two ethnic Irish regiments shared exactly the same demographic profile, and each was reflective of the communities, circumstances and moment in time that produced

[33] Dunkelman, *Patrick Henry Jones*, 22-29.

it.[34] Patently, enlistment in such units allowed soldiers both to serve amongst their own and to express their self-identity by acting as highly visible representatives of their ethnicity on a national stage. Nonetheless, the fact remains that despite the overwhelming prominence of ethnic Irish regiments in both the memory and historiography of Irish service, the vast bulk of Irish volunteers did not serve in them. For many this was an accident of scale. Numerous Irish American communities formed company-level units, which then marched to war as a component of non-ethnic regiments. Typical were the efforts of the Irish in the upstate New York town of Seneca Falls, who formed the "Irish Volunteers" who went on to represent them as Company K of the 33rd New York "Ontario Regiment". These Irish American volunteers departed for the front with as much fanfare among their local community as that provided for the Irish Brigade regiments in New York City.[35] Some companies had large Irish contingents without having the numbers to be wholly Irish American. Depending on the ratios, some still successfully expressed an Irish identity. Company A of the 13th Vermont Volunteers, "The Emmett Guards", contained Irish Americans from Burlington, Rutland and Westford (many drawn from among the marble quarrying community) but also included a number of native white Americans and French Canadians.[36] Other formations who had at their inception been overtly ethnic evidently do not appear to have carried their Irish appellations into service, despite strong Irish American numbers. In Boston what had begun recruitment as the "Irish Brigade of

[34] Ryan Keating's work on the 9th Connecticut, 17th Wisconsin and 23rd Illinois in particular has served to highlight this. See Keating, *Shades of Green*.
[35] David W. Judd, *The Story of the Thirty-Third N.Y.S. Vols, or Two Years Campaigning in Virginia and Maryland* (Rochester: Benton & Andrews, 1864), 28-29.
[36] Ralph Orson Sturtevant, *Pictorial History Thirteenth Regiment Vermont Volunteers War of 1861-1865* (Unknown publisher, 1910), 425.

Volunteers" eventually found its way into service as Company F of the 20th Massachusetts Volunteers, "The Harvard Regiment."[37]

A number of regiments attracted the Irish at levels not dissimilar to those enjoyed by green flag formations. Some of these outfits carried affiliations that naturally aligned them with Irish America, as was the case with the strongly Irish 42nd New York Volunteers, tied to the city's Democratic Tammany Hall organisation, and the 11th New York Volunteers–the "First Fire Zouaves"–drawn from amongst the city's firemen. Despite not being a green flag unit, the 42nd New York also contained a number of prominent Fenians, with Young Irelander and Fenian founder Michael Doheny playing a role in its organisation.[38] The 3rd Rhode Island Heavy Artillery, the largest body to serve from that state during the war, drew significant numbers of Irish Americans from the manufacturing industries, particularly into Companies I and K. They had apparently opted for the regiment as a sufficient number of Irish officers could not be found to form a distinctly ethnic unit, and—according to the regimental historian—because of opposition to "all appearances of caste" among the state volunteers.[39] In a recruitment system that was centred around the ability of ambitious and patriotic community leaders to organise their own companies, personal loyalties often proved decisive. James Cullen, an Irish contractor in Detroit, Michigan, undoubtedly drew on the connections

[37] Richard F. Miller, *Harvard's Civil War: A History of the Twentieth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2005), 22.

[38] For a history of the 42nd New York see Fred C. Wexler, *The Tammany Regiment: A History of the Forty-Second New York Volunteer Infantry, 1861-1864* (Bloomington, Indiana: iUniverse, 2016). For a discussion of the service of New York's firemen in the Civil War see Augustine E. Costello, *Our Firemen: A History of the New York Fire Departments, Volunteer and Paid* (New York: Knickerbocker Press 1887; reprint 1997), 717-736.

[39] Reverend Frederic Denison, *Shot and Shell: The Third Rhode Island Heavy Artillery Regiment in the Rebellion, 1861-1865* (Providence, Rhode Island: J.A. & R.A. Reid, 1879), 25, 27.

he had made as an employer to speedily raise men for what became Company E of the 24th Michigan Volunteers, and as a result it had a distinctly Irish character.[40]

Equally important were the economic incentives on offer, even early in the war. It was almost certainly the promise of attractive terms that enabled an officer of the 40th New York Volunteers to poach an entire company of Irishmen from Lawrence, Massachusetts and secure them for service in his own regiment.[41] However, even at company level, it was most common for Irish Americans to serve in numbers where they did not make up the majority ethnicity.[42] It was a rare Union formation indeed that did not have a sprinkling of Irish Americans on its roster, particularly if it had recruited from amongst urban populations. While some of these Irish served as the only representative of their ethnicity, it was more common for Irish Americans to form small groups within larger mixed companies. It is apparent that once they had chosen to enlist, a range of often interwoven factors influenced each Irish American's decision regarding with whom he served. In 1861 and 1862, the majority based their choice on a combination of personal friendships, community affiliation, economic incentivisation, officer standing and unit character. As the war progressed, economics became more and more dominant as the major determinant in the selection they made. But in the heady days of the conflict's first months, many likely chose their unit in much the same way that William Carroll of the 61st New York Infantry seems to have—on the spur of the moment. When his parents asked him why he had joined a New York City regiment and

[40] Orson Blair Curtis, *History of the Twenty-Fourth Michigan of the Iron Brigade, Known as the Detroit and Wayne County Regiment* (Detroit, Michigan: Winn & Hammond, 1891), 34, 42, 331-333. The Lieutenant-Colonel of the 24th Michigan was Mark Flanigan, from Co. Antrim.

[41] Fred C. Floyd, *History of the Fortieth (Mozart) Regiment New York Volunteers* (Boston: F.H. Gilson Company, 1909), 35. Many of the Massachusetts Irishmen in the 40th New York were Fenians. See Patrick Steward and Bryan P. McGovern, *The Fenians: Irish Rebellion in the North Atlantic World, 1858-1876* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2013), 32.

[42] Though beyond the scope of the current research project, there is a need for a broad-range analysis of northern regiments at a company level to determine the nature and extent of "Irish" companies in non-ethnic units, which will serve to add to the discussion on Irish ethnic cohesiveness in the Federal military.

not one from their Brooklyn home, he explained "i listed in the new York park i was not in Brooklyn the day that i listed".[43]

The story of early war volunteers has dominated analysis of Irish American servicemen just as it has dominated the wider field of Civil War soldier studies.[44] But immigrants and Irish Americans were so associated with late war recruiting that any broad analysis of their participation must seek to incorporate those who entered the military from mid-1863 onwards, particularly if early and late war enlistees are to be compared. It is instructive in that context to examine the means and methods by which Irish Americans entered the military during the late war period, and how they have historically been perceived.

As the fighting dragged on through the bloody confrontations of 1862, the Union's escalating need for manpower ran up against a growing reticence among those of military age in the North to commit to what was clearly going to be a protracted and deadly struggle. By the autumn and winter of that year, few were under any illusions about both the hardships and risks that accompanied military service. In an attempt to solve the issue, Federal authorities instituted the draft. Their first efforts were embodied in the Militia Act of 17 July 1862, which empowered the Secretary of War to draft militiamen for nine months service, with each state assigned quotas they were required to meet.[45] The need for a more extensive conscription programme led to the Enrollment Act of 3 March 1863. This required all male citizens and immigrants who had declared

[43] William Carroll to "dear parants" 6? December 1861, Navy WC2901.

[44] The historiographical pattern of concentrating analysis on early war volunteers is something that has also been noted in the study of Confederate servicemen. See Kenneth W. Noe, *Reluctant Rebels: The Confederates Who Joined the Army after 1861* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 7.

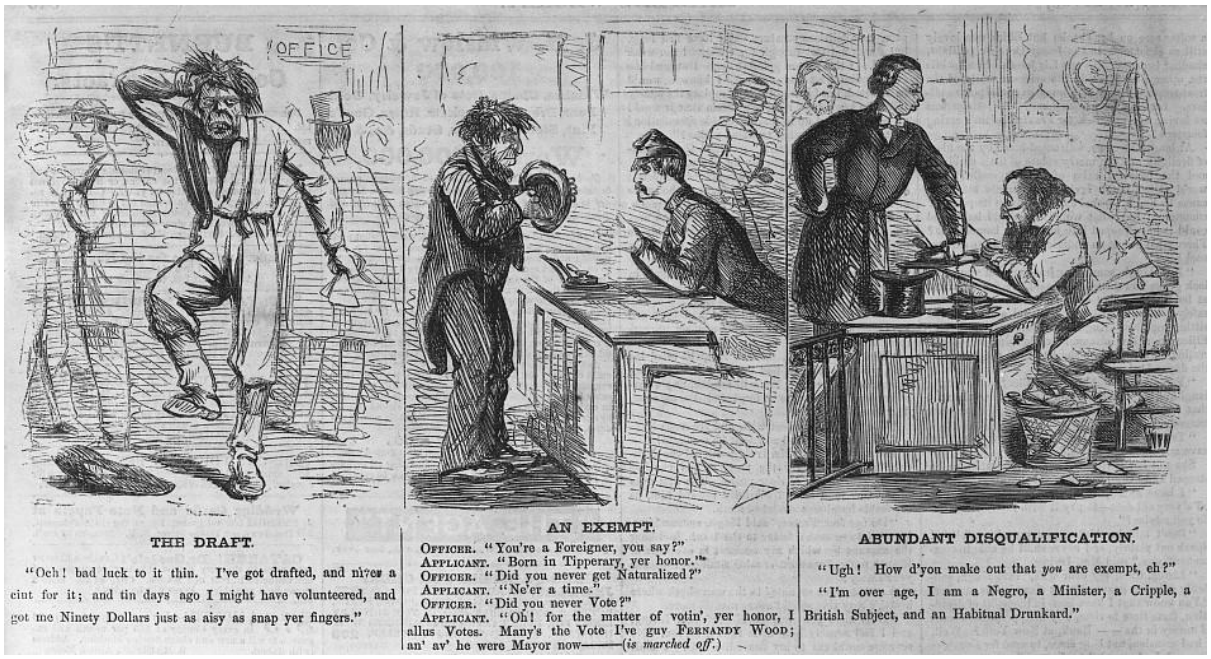
[45] Eugene C. Murdock, *One Million Men: The Civil War Draft in the North* (Madison, Wisconsin: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1971), 6; Eugene C. Murdock, *Patriotism Limited 1862-1865: The Civil War Draft and the Bounty System* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1967), 6-7.

an intent to become citizens aged between 20 and 45 to be enrolled for the draft. Those enrolled were split into two classes. Class One was composed of single men aged between 20 and 45 and married men between 20 and 35, Class Two married men between 35 and 45. Class Two were only to be drawn when Class One had been exhausted.[46] Each draft district (which equated to congressional districts) was assigned a quota, with the draft required only if the number of men supplied fell short. Once drawn, an individual could avoid service by claiming exemption, furnishing a commutation fee of $300 or by supplying a substitute. The commutation fee option was repealed in July 1864, a move that led to an explosion in the cost of securing a substitute.[47] All told, four drafts were held in the North between the summer of 1863 and the close of the war.[48]

The draft and the substitute industry it created significantly muddied perceptions of Irish American wartime service, particularly as in the eyes of many northerners the Irish were synonymous with it. Irish American efforts to evade or resist the draft and to cheat the bounty system were seized upon by many of their opponents in the North. As early as August 1862 *Harper's Weekly* in New York was running cartoons satirising efforts to avoid the draft, choosing Irish Americans in characteristically simian form to represent two of their three "dodgers" (the third being a member of the upper classes).[49] Within a week of its publication, the same New York Irish Americans targeted by these racist caricatures were receiving word of the losses their communities had sustained at Second

[46] Murdock, *Patriotism Limited*, 7-10.
[47] Murdock, *One Million Men*, 6-7. For the best study of the murky and fraudulent world of substitute broking and its consequences and outcomes, see Brian P. Luskey, *Men is Cheap: Exposing the Frauds of Free Labor in Civil War America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020).
[48] These were Summer 1863, Spring 1864, Fall 1864 and Spring 1865. See Murdock, *Patriotism Limited*, 13.
[49] *Harper's Weekly*, 23 August 1862.

Bull Run, where the city's units had taken a battering, while the bloodbath of Antietam lay on the immediate horizon.



The Harper's Weekly depictions of men seeking to avoid the draft on 23 August 1862. The very next issue ran with a full-page image of Brigadier General Michael Corcoran on the front cover to celebrate his release, demonstrating the role class played in the magazine's perceptions and depictions of the Irish.

The draft was extremely unpopular, particularly among the lower classes. The commutation fee appeared to offer credence to the belief that this was a rich man's war but a poor man's fight. Opposition to the draft was most savage in New York City, where it manifested itself in the infamous orgy of violence that characterised the Irish-dominated New York Draft Riots of July 1863. The fact that this and a number of other incidents of unrest–such as the draft opposition in Pennsylvania's anthracite coal region–were dominated by the Irish led to lingering questions about the nature of Irish American loyalty to the Union.[50] Irish Americans did prove particularly adept at

[50] For an analysis of the New York Draft Riots see Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1991). For Irish opposition in Pennsylvania's anthracite coal region see

obtaining draft exemptions, and were more than happy to claim foreign citizenship as one method of doing so.[51] Indeed, as Tyler Anbinder has demonstrated, the Irish American ability to avoid being held to service meant that they and other immigrants appear to have been less likely to end up in uniform due to the draft than native-born working-class whites.[52] Nevertheless, it remained the case that only an unlucky (or willing) few ever ended up at the front as a result of having their name pulled from the draft wheel. Of the 776,829 men who were officially drafted during the American Civil War, only 46,347 ever donned uniform.[53] Instead, it was the draft substitutes and bounty volunteers who provided the vital manpower the United States required during the war's final years—and among their ranks, Irish Americans were extremely plentiful.

While just over 45,000 drafted men went into the military, 73,607 were paid to act as substitutes.[54] Tens of thousands more took their pick from the local and state bounties and financial inducements that were offered by towns and districts throughout the North in an effort to stave off the draft. While it has been argued that Irish Americans began to abandon their support for the war after 1863, this was not reflected in their willingness to enter the military during this period.[55] In fact, what evidence exists suggests that they likely proved proportionately more willing to enlist than native white Americans. In 1863 immigrant men made up 77 percent of substitutes in New York's Fifth District, 84 percent in Massachusetts's Third District, 74 percent in Concord, New Hampshire and

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Kenny, *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires*, 86-96. On the impact the Riots had on nativist perceptions of Irish Americans see e.g. Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 188-189; Samito, *Becoming American*, 132.

[51] The Irish in the South employed similar tactics to escape Confederate conscription, see Gleeson, *Green and the Gray*, 60-62.

[52] Tyler Anbinder, "Which Poor Man's Fight? Immigrants and the Federal Conscription of 1863", *Civil War History* 52: 4 (2006), 346.

[53] Murdock, *One Million Men*, 356.

[54] Ibid.

[55] On the 1863 loss of support, see e.g. Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 4; Kohl, "Introduction" in Conyngham, *Irish Brigade*, xvi; For an assessment that sees continued support for the war among Irish American communities outside the large eastern cities, see Keating, *Shades of Green*, 95, 111, 133, 177.

60 percent in Pennsylvania's Eighth District. These figures were often multiples of their proportion in the general local population.[56] Similarly, analysis of non-residents who enlisted in the towns of Claremont and Newport, New Hampshire, found that almost 60 percent were foreign-born, of whom almost 20 percent were native to Ireland.[57]

Monetary inducements were central to enticing the majority of these Irish American substitutes and bounty volunteers into the service, and (often unscrupulous) brokers targeted newspapers that were widely read within the Irish American community. Typical were those that ran in the 5 June 1864 edition of the *New York Herald*. Advertisements there promised that "ALL IRISHMEN, GERMANS AND ENGLISHMEN who want employment will be paid a large amount cash to go as substitutes for drafted men. Best chance ever offered." Another proclaimed "SUBSTITUTES CAN GET $500 CASH.—100 IRISHMEN, Germans and Englishmen wanted immediately. Recruits also wanted. Choice of artillery and cavalry. Boardinghousekeepers and agents please apply…"[58] The working-class Irish responded in their droves. The financial rewards were enough to entice hopeful men directly from Ireland, and contributed towards the rebounding of Irish immigration that saw inward numbers triple in 1863.[59] American Consuls in Ireland were inundated with requests for passage to the United States in return for enlistment in Federal forces.[60] While there is no evidence that the Consuls ever acted upon these requests, many men did enter into

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[56] Anbinder, "Which Poor Man's Fight?", 369. Among the records that Anbinder analysed, he found that about half of the soldiers who were recruited as a result of the 1863 draft were immigrants, the vast majority having enlisted as substitutes. Anbinder, "Which Poor Man's Fight?", 372.

[57] Thomas R. Kemp, "Community and War: The Civil War Experience of Two New Hampshire Towns," in Vinovskis (ed) *Towards a Social History of the American Civil War*, 67-68.

[58] *New York Herald*, 5 June 1864.

[59] For figures see Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 347, and Chapter One.

[60] Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 347. For a discussion of the appeals to American Consuls in Ireland and consular activities during the war see Bernadette Whelan, *American Government in Ireland, 1790-1913: A History of the US Consular Service* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 105-156.

agreements with third-parties to have their passage paid to America in return for either labouring services or military enlistment.

The corrupt systems that developed around the substitute and bounty system became legion, and Irish Americans were highly visible among both the exploiters and the exploited. Their reputation was not helped by the high-profile serial desertion of men such as John O'Connor, who claimed to have jumped thirty-two times before he was caught in 1865, and Thomas Ryan, who was executed for jumping some thirty times.[61] Nevertheless, there was relatively little evidence for the openly prejudicial and nativist views of men such as Provost Marshal General James Barnet Fry, who confidently charged that it was "a notorious circumstance that the great mass of the professional bounty jumpers were Europeans."[62]

The quality, motivations and commitment of these late war recruits can be called into question, particularly among those who enlisted following the removal of the commutation clause in July 1864. But they are all too often dismissed en-bloc as unscrupulous and unreliable mercenaries. Historically, Civil War scholarship has demonstrated a bias towards the study of the early war "ideological" volunteer, often implicitly marking such individuals out as having been somehow better and more admirable men than their late war counterparts.[63] The lack of ideological motivation to enlist in a war or a failure to show the same willingness to die or be maimed for a cause does not make men lesser, or correlate with moral inferiority. Indeed, many of these late war recruits played a crucial role in the Union's final push towards victory in 1864 and 1865. There is a need for a corrective in how they are perceived; rather than contrasting

[61] Murdock, *One Million Men*, 226.
[62] OR Series 3, Volume 5, 668-669. For more on public attitudes to the war, and differing perceptions on whether it was natives or immigrants who were "worse" at jumping, see Michael Thomas Smith, "The Most Desperate Scoundrels Unhung: Bounty Jumpers and Recruitment Fraud in the Civil War North", *American Nineteenth Century History* 6:2 (June 2003) 149-172.
[63] See e.g. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, ix.

them with the early war volunteer, it is time to examine these men in the wider context of wartime northern society. As J. Matthew Gallman's research has demonstrated, military service was not necessarily seen as a pre-requisite for being deemed a loyal and patriotic Union man during the Civil War. Nevertheless, these late war recruits elected to serve in a war which *c.* 60 percent of the white-men of military age in the United States chose to avoid.[64] As the most willing enlistees ran out, it was left to immigrants and other working-class men to decide if the potential once in a lifetime economic benefits of service outweighed the by then all too apparent risks. There were undoubtedly those among their number who sought to exploit the system and who shied away from battle—the fact remains that the majority did not.

Given the breadth, scale and variance of Irish American service through the course of the conflict, seeking to establish a more accurate baseline for the how many of these men may have served in the United States military during the Civil War is essential. As alluded to above, the standard estimate of *c.* 150,000 men most commonly used in the field of Civil War history has conflated volunteer enlistment with total service.[65] Unpicking the origins of this figure leads back to William F. Fox, who was the first to use it in his 1889 *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War*. Fox in turn had sourced his number from the 1869 United States Sanitary Commission report by Benjamin Apthorp Gould, *Investigations in the Military and Anthropological Statistics of American Soldiers.* Apthorp Gould had arrived at a figure of *c.* 144,221 Irish-born, a number that Fox had sought to present "in round numbers."[66] Yet in the small print of

[64] For these figures see J. Matthew Gallman, *Defining Duty in the Civil War: Personal Choice, Popular Culture, and the Union Home Front* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 7-8.
[65] For the use of this figure see for example Shiels, *The Irish in the American Civil War*, 7; Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 2; Keating, *Shades of Green*, 26.
[66] William F. Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War 1861-1865* (Albany: Albany Publishing Company, 1889), 62; Apthorp Gould, *Investigations*, 27.

Apthorp Gould's figure, he had outlined the limitations of this total. He was explicit that the estimate was only inclusive of Irish-born volunteers from the Eastern and Midwestern states. It did not count men who served in the navy or the regulars, nor did it include volunteers who had served the states of the Pacific coast, or the territories, or those who had enlisted in units raised in former Confederate states, such as heavily Irish Louisiana.[67]

The picture changes significantly when the men Apthorp Gould omitted are reintegrated. Drawing on the latest scholarship to assess nativity in the different branches of the military, a reappraisal of the numbers of Irish-born in Federal service that incorporates the branches and volunteers Apthorp Gould excluded is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Estimate of total number of Irish-born in the Union military during the American Civil War.

GROUP	**ESTIMATE OF IRISH-BORN**
Union Volunteers from East & Midwest	144221[68]
Union Navy	23608[69]
Regulars in 1861	5425[70]

[67] Apthorp Gould's precise phraseology was as follows: "We thus arrive at the following table of nativities for the volunteers from the several States, the colored troops being, of course, omitted, as also the navy, and the 92 000 volunteers from States and Territories not here considered. The word "volunteers" is here used in the official signification, as denoting the citizen soldiery in distinction from regular soldiers, and not, as in a subsequent chapter, in distinction from recruits." Apthorp Gould, *Investigations*, 26.

[68] Apthorp Gould, *Investigations*, 27.

[69] Michael Bennett's analysis indicates that 118,044 men enlisted in the Union naval service between 1861 and 1865, and his statistical sample produced a figure of 20 percent Irish-born. This would represent some 23,608 men. Bennett, *Union Jacks*, 5, 9.

[70] Mark W. Johnson's analysis indicates that of the slightly more than 14,500 professionals on the rolls in January 1861, almost 37 percent were Irish-born. His sample of more than 2,000 antebellum regulars found that 36.64 percent had Irish nativity, with the next highest proportion those born in the United States, at 33.68 percent of the total. See Johnson, ""Where Are the Regulars?", 150, 295.

Table 4. (Continued).

New Regular Enlistments 1861-1865	10000[71]
Union Volunteers from Pacific Coast & Territories	6440[72]
TOTAL	**189694**

Given that a proportion of the naval recruits had likely seen army service prior to their enlistments, and allowing for other duplication, a reasonable figure for Irish-born service in the Union military might be *c.* 180,000. As is apparent, the exclusion of those who elected to enlist in the navy and the regulars, both of which were particularly attractive to the Irish, has had a major impact on our understanding of the scale of Irish American service during the conflict.

As discussed in Chapter One, even this does not represent a true figure of Irish American service, given that Irish nativity was not a reliable marker of ethnicity or identity during this period. Given the nature of the surviving records, seeking to integrate the non-Irish-born sons of Irish immigrants into the total is extremely difficult to accomplish with any certitude. Perhaps the best effort is that of historian Don H. Doyle. In his estimate, based on his reading of the Apthorp Gould data, he places the number of American-born men of Irish parentage in the Union military at *c.* 90,000.[73] If accurate, this would mean the total Irish American contribution to the northern war effort could have been in the vicinity of 270,000 men—and this without considering

[71] Mark W. Johnson calculates that *c.* 69,000 men served in the regulars during the Civil War. During the course of the conflict some 50,000 new recruits were taken in. His sample of new wartime enlistments indicated that 20.53%, or some 10,000 men, were Irish-born. See Johnson, ""Where Are the Regulars?", 2, 150, 295, 306.

[72] Apthorp Gould excluded the 92,000 volunteers from the Pacific Coast and territories. His figure of 144,221 Irish-born represents slightly more than seven percent of the total number of white volunteer soldiers among his study group (2,018,200). If they served in the same proportion among the 92,000, that would represent an additional 6,440 men.

[73] Don H. Doyle, *The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 173.

Irish Americans of British or Canadian nativity. To again adopt a conservative approach, a total figure of *c*. 250,000 would seem a reasonable one to put forward for total Irish American participation.

The implications of such a reappraisal are readily apparent. Rather than considering why Irish Americans were underrepresented in the Civil War military, it becomes necessary to fundamentally reframe our analysis, and to instead ask why upwards of a quarter of a million Irish Americans decided to fight for the United States during the American Civil War.

2.2 A Regiment of Representatives: The Correspondents

From the early war volunteer to the late war substitute, and from the Irish Brigade private to the Mississippi Squadron landsman, Irish American representation in the Union military was vast and varied. It follows that gaining comprehensive insight into the service of this quarter of a million men requires the examination of as broad and diverse a representative group as possible. The letters of the 395 Irish American servicemen gathered for this thesis represent the largest and most diversified corpus of Irish American correspondence from the American Civil War thus far identified. It is argued that this regiment worth of correspondents also constitutes the most fully representative grouping of Irish Union servicemen ever examined. In the antebellum years they made their homes throughout the northern United States; when war came they entered the fray in a multitude of different units and branches of the service; when in the field they took the fight to the Confederacy in every Theater where the American Civil War was fought. Their geographic and military diversity broadly mirrors the relative proportionate service levels of Irish Americans during the conflict. As a result, an in-depth examination of their military profiles presents a unique opportunity to draw

significant wider inferences regarding the totality of Irish American service, particularly with respect to enlistment patterns and demographics.

2.2.1 Enlistment of the Correspondents

Of the 395 writers that form the backbone of this study, almost 50 percent "listed" in 1861, while nearly 75 percent were wearing Union blue by the end of 1862.[74] This rush to the colours was not uniform, but came in a series of waves (Figure 1). The first and largest occurred in the six months between May and October 1861. Most intensive across June, July, August and September, only the defeat at Bull Run intervened to put a temporary dampener on recruitment. These men were answering the first in what became a series of calls made for long-term volunteers during the conflict.

The first summer of the war had not taken hold before the government realised that their April request for 75,000 ninety-day militiamen would be insufficient, both in scope and duration.[75] On 3 May Lincoln called for 42,000 three-year volunteers, 18,000 sailors and an enlargement of the regular army.[76] Congress confirmed the President's request on 6 August, which when combined with acts of 22 and 25 July increased the required number to 500,000 men. It was a mark of the enthusiasm prevalent in those early months that 700,680 troops were ultimately furnished.[77] Among the Irish American correspondents, this 1861 drive reached its crescendo in August. But once the

[74] Impacting this figure in relation to the widows and dependents files is the fact that the earlier men enlisted and longer they served, the greater their chances of dying. The date of enlistment percentages for the 395 correspondents by year are: Antebellum—1.27 percent, 1861—48.86 percent, 1862—26.07 percent, 1863—9.37 percent, 1864—12.41 percent, 1865—2.02 percent.

[75] Ultimately 91,816 men were furnished in answer to this call. See Frederick Phisterer, *Statistical Record of the Armies of the United States* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), 3. A proportion of the subsequent three-year Irish American enlistees in 1861 would have also been among the number who had given three-month service at the commencement of the war.

[76] McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 322.

[77] Phisterer, *Statistical Record*, 4; OR Series 3, Volume 4, 1264. 657,868 of the men who answered this call enlisted for three-year terms, 30,950 for two-years.

pool of willing men was exhausted, enlistments fell away precipitously and—a slight recovery in December excepted—the numbers would not rally again for many months. The impact of this 1861 recruitment drive on the size of the Federal military was dramatic, and demonstrates why this was the most intensive period of enlistment for the Irish American letter writers. When staring down the barrel of First Bull Run on 1 July 1861, the army's strength had stood at 186,751. By 1 January 1862, their numbers had exploded to 575,917 men.[78]

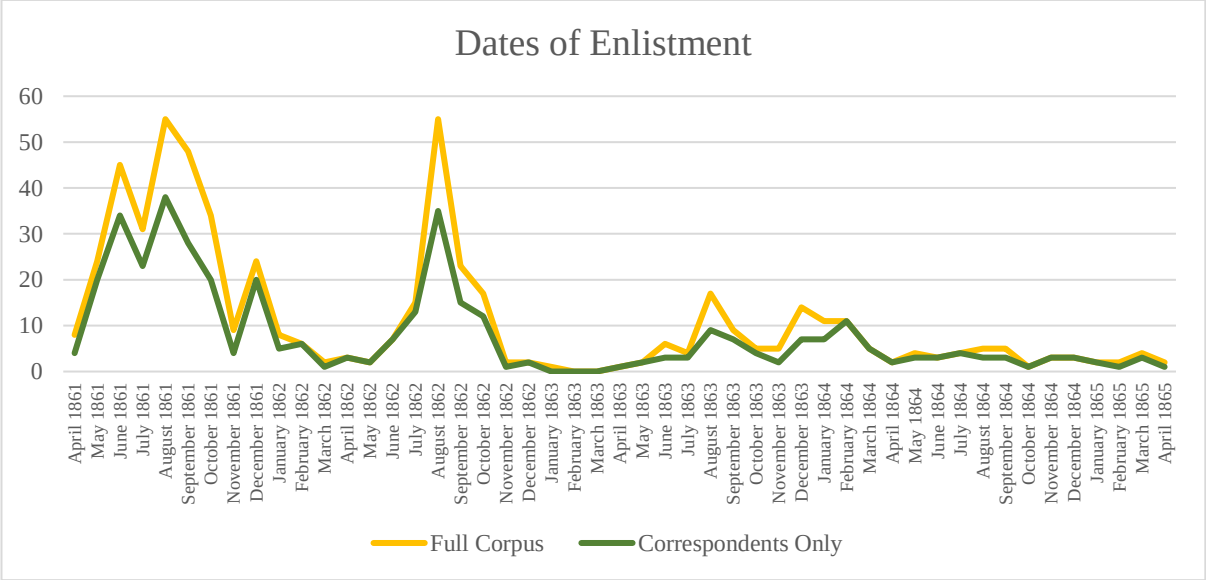

Figure 1. Date of enlistment of soldiers and sailors (Full Corpus and Correspondents Only) expressed by month between April 1861 and April 1865. The figures for the Correspondents Only are based on 386 men who enlisted between those dates for whom month of enlistment data was obtained. The Full Corpus figures are based on similar data for 551 of the complete group. The peaks and troughs are mirrored in both.[79]

[78] Phisterer, *Statistical Record*, 62.

[79] Soldiers and sailors who enlisted outside the months of April 1861 to April 1865 are excluded. A small number of the late war enlistments have indications of prior military service, e.g. profession listed as "soldier."

In April 1862 the government suspended recruitment, but before long they were once again appealing for men.[80] By the summer of 1862 the heavy attrition of the conflict and its insatiable requirement for manpower had left the Union in desperate need. A call for 300,000 three-year enlistments came on 2 July 1862, followed on 4 August with a demand for 300,000 militia for nine-month service.[81] This prompted the second major wave of Irish American enlistment, between July and October 1862, which again reaching its zenith in August. The wider impact of this recruitment was once more visible in army numbers, which increased from 637,126 on 31 March 1862 to 918,191 on 1 January 1863.[82] The efforts to entice men into the military in the summer and autumn of 1862 witnessed an increase in the state and federal inducements on offer, and also brought about the Militia Act, the forerunner of the draft that would become the dominant feature of recruitment efforts from 1863 onwards.[83] As with the previous year, the correspondent and full corpus data indicates that once all those willing to sign on in response to this call had entered the service, recruitment all but dried up. The final, and smallest, wave of Irish American recruitment among the correspondents came in the late summer of 1863 and winter of 1863/4. This was sparked initially by the first draft held under the Enrollment Act in July 1863, with many of those enlisting at this time able to benefit from increasingly generous financial inducements.

It is apparent that whatever their ultimate motivations for enlistment, Irish Americans made their decision to enlist in the context of specific government calls and drives to increase numbers in the military. As will be explored in Chapter Five, their personal ideologies and circumstances played a major role in the choices they made, but the

[80] Richard F. Miller (ed) *States at War, Volume 4: A Reference Guide for Delaware, Maryland, and New Jersey in the Civil War*, (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2015), 113-115; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 491.
[81] Phisterer, *Statistical Record*, 4-5; OR Series 3, Volume 4, 1265.
[82] Phisterer, *Statistical Record*, 62.
[83] For a discussion of the bounties and draft see McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 491-494.

climate created at a local, state and national level as the Union voraciously pursued men for service was intrinsic to the process that transformed them into soldiers and sailors. Conversely, in those months where that climate was absent or diminished, few Irish Americans chose to throw in their lot with Uncle Sam.

2.2.2 Employment of the Correspondents

Analysis of the pre-enlistment occupations of the 395 correspondents demonstrates that they were overwhelmingly drawn from among the lower classes, ranging from skilled artisans to unskilled labourers. Their employment histories also demonstrate the complexities of individual and familial occupational status that belies the simple one-dimensional declarations made on military enlistment papers. The picture that emerges is one of a society where dedicated efforts towards upward mobility were forced to contend with the extreme precarity of employment that characterised the lot of many Irish Americans on the eve of Civil War.

Almost 92 percent of the letter writers worked in blue-collar or agricultural positions, or had no employment (Table 5).[84] The largest cohort (36.80 percent) were drawn from the ranks of the skilled, men such as carpenters, blacksmiths, tailors and painters. Slightly under 19 percent were semiskilled, such as those identified as factory workers or men who made their living off the sea, while a little less than 10 percent worked in agricultural positions, either as agricultural labourers or farmers. One in four were unskilled, largely seeking work as labourers and day labourers. Of the white-collar correspondents, most worked as printers, clerks or pedlars—proprietorial positions were

[84] Employment information was gathered from a range of sources including pension files, census returns, compiled military service records, enlistment records, muster rolls and regimental descriptive books. The percentages are based on the men for whom employment could be identified; it was not established for 93 of the 568 men in the full corpus, and for 58 of the 395 correspondents.

rare. Their low representation is also a symptom of the pension application process, as dependents from the upper echelons of society (be they Irish or otherwise) rarely had to resort to the submission of correspondence to prove their entitlement.[85]

Table 5. Occupational Status of Irish Americans from the Full Corpus and Correspondents Only. Excluding those for whom no occupation data could be ascertained.[86]

	% Unskilled	% Semiskilled	% Skilled	% Low White-Collar	% High White-Collar	% Agricultural	% None	TOTAL
Correspondents Only	24.93	18.40	36.80	7.42	0.89	9.20	2.37	337
Full Corpus	30.11	16.84	35.37	6.74	0.63	8.42	1.89	475

The occupations of the correspondents are broadly in line with what might be expected from an urban Irish population (See Chapter One). The one deviation comes with the apparent underrepresentation of the unskilled, though as will become apparent below, the age profile of the letter writers meant that they were less likely to be unskilled than those even a few years older than them.[87] Detailed analysis of the working histories of

[85] Research indicates that officers and their families received more money, more easily, than those associated with the enlisted ranks. See Russell L. Johnson, "“Great Injustice”: Social Status and the Distribution of Military Pensions after the Civil War", *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10:2 (2011), 137-160.

[86] The occupational classifications are adapted from Stephan Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis 1880-1970* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973), 289-292 and Gleeson, *The Irish in the South:1815-1877*, 195-196.

[87] James Zibro has interpreted similar underrepresentation identified in his analysis as evidence that those Irish who chose to enlist were atypical, and “exceptional among Irish Americans.” He classified 38.8 percent of the men in his sample as unskilled. See Zibro, "The Life of Paddy Yank", 49, 62, 81. The extent to which classification preferences play a role in determining percentages of skilled, semiskilled and unskilled is a major consideration for the historian of Irish American service. For an example of a different set of criteria being utilised in determining skilled/unskilled see Truslow, "Peasants into Patriots", xxviii-xxix and Truslow, "The New York Irish Brigade", 47.

individual soldiers and sailors indicates the fluidity (and precarity) of Irish American employment, with men frequently advancing and regressing back and forth through unskilled/semiskilled/skilled positions during the course of their working lives. An example is James Briody, the American-born son of immigrants from Castlerahan, Co. Meath, who was described as a stonecutter when he enlisted in the 20th Massachusetts Infantry in August 1862.[88] Yet James was not employed in that capacity at the time he joined up. He had spent the six months prior to enlistment driving an express wagon, and before that had tried his hand as a seaman.[89] Irish-born James McGee is recorded as a stage driver on the muster roll of the 132nd New York Infantry, but according to those who knew him he was a labourer in a soda water manufactory when he took up his gun.[90] Galway native Patrick Kelly was listed as a shoemaker in his compiled military service record, but is entered as a labourer on the Massachusetts state roster.[91] In fact, Kelly was an apprentice at the time of his enlistment.[92]

The evidence suggests that some Irish Americans may have been seeking to put their "best foot forward" when describing their employment to recruiters, and that their listed occupations may not necessarily have always been what they did, but what they intended or hoped to do. The projection of future occupation has previously been identified in other immigrant records. When leaving Ireland for Australia, former Donegal schoolteacher (and informer) Patrick McGlynn had his occupation recorded as "miner" on the manifest. He had never been a miner, but hoped to become one in the

[88] CMSR of James Briody, Company I, 20th Massachusetts Infantry, NARA.
[89] Affidavit of Mary Jane Briody and Maggie Briody 6 March 1863, Affidavit of Margaret Briody 24 October 1863, both in WC9732.
[90] CWMRA of James McGee, 132nd New York Infantry, NYSA; Affidavit of Owen McGinn and Jane Satchwell 24 June 1864, WC96027.
[91] CMSR of Patrick Kelly, Company K, 28th Massachusetts Infantry, NARA; Massachusetts Adjutant General, *Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Civil War*, volume 3 (Norwood, Massachusetts: The Norwood Press, 1932), 242.
[92] Affidavit of Patrick Byrne and Morris Fitzgibbon 15 February 1864, WC22521.

Victoria goldfields.[93] Even for those who had previously worked in skilled positions, it did not mean they were employed in those areas when they chose to become soldiers or sailors. Civil War military records are also plagued by inconsistencies in how occupations were recorded. For example, while men like Barney Carr, Michael Daly, John Fitzpatrick and Richard Flynn were entered on the rosters as "farmers", all were in fact farm labourers.[94] Similar issues surround men with apparently skilled employment, who in reality worked in semi-skilled factory positions.

Many of the correspondents exhibited signs of the inter-generational upward mobility that was a major attraction of the United States for Irish immigrants. Future 3rd New Hampshire Infantry Private John Crowley was a tinman's apprentice in 1860, when his father was employed as a labourer.[95] John Hennessey held a position as a clerk in Troy, New York, while his older brother and father were common labourers—though on his 1863 enlistment he gave his occupation as bartender.[96] Another labourer's son, Patrick Dunnican from Co. Roscommon, was a groom in 1860 and a blacksmith by the time he was drafted into the ranks of the 32nd Massachusetts Infantry in 1863.[97] Mathew McCourt, the New York-born child of an Irish labourer father in Ann Arbor, was a mason when he became a soldier in the 1st Michigan Infantry.[98] Prior to the

[93] See Breandán Mac Suibhne, *The End of Outrage: Post-Famine Adjustment in Rural Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017), 216.

[94] Illinois, Databases of Illinois Veterans Index, 1775-1995, Ancestry.com; WC100612; 1860 U.S. Census, West Liberty, Salem, Champaign, Ohio, NARA; Affidavit of Michael McCormick 16 December 1869, WC143339; 1860 U.S. Census, Township 15 N Range 8 E, Douglas, Illinois, NARA, WC56115; CWMRA of Richard Flynn, 117th New York Infantry, NYSA; 1860 U.S. Census, Kirkland, Oneida, New York, NARA; WC91465.

[95] 1860 U.S. Census, Bangor Ward 6, Penobscot, Maine, NARA; WC101875.

[96] 1860 U.S. Census, Troy Ward 8, Rensselaer, New York, NARA; WC97970; CWMRA of John Hennessey, 7th New York Heavy Artillery, NYSA.

[97] 1860 U.S. Census, Milton, Norfolk, Massachusetts, NARA; CMSR of Patrick Dunican, Company G, 32nd Massachusetts Infantry, NARA.

[98] WC85252; 1860 U.S. Census, Ann Arbor Ward 3, Washtenaw, Michigan, NARA.

upheaval created by the Civil War, many of these men were on track to begin the long and uneven climb that would come to characterise social advancement in Irish America.

2.2.3 Distribution of the Correspondents

The geographic concentrations and military distribution of the 395 writers confirms their viability as representatives of total Irish American service. New York dominates among them just as it dominated Irish American service as whole. Men who were credited to the Empire State represent more than 40 percent of the correspondents (Table 6). This figure dwarves the slightly more than 16 percent of correspondents who entered the fight as representatives from each of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, the next largest contingents. Taken together, these three states account for greater than 73 percent of all the correspondents. A little over five percent served Illinois, and all told just under 14 percent of the writers served in units that hailed from the Midwest or Confederacy (in the latter case represented solely by Louisiana). These figures are broadly comparable to the proportionate distribution of the Irish population in the 1860 North, with a slight bias towards New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, and a commensurate slight underrepresentation of smaller states. It also compares favourably to the general pattern of Irish volunteer enlistment estimated by the United States Sanitary Commission.[99] The distribution reinforces the fact that it was Eastern communities who sustained the vast bulk of Irish American losses during the Civil War.

[99] For comparison, Benjamin Apthorp Gould for the Sanitary Commission (USSC) credits 35.50% of the Irish volunteers to New York, compared to 40.51% in the correspondent sample (CS). The relative figures for other states are as follows: Pennsylvania—USSC: 12.08%, CS: 16.46%, Massachusetts—USSC: 6.94%, CS:16.71%, Illinois—USSC: 8.35%, CS: 5.32%, Connecticut & Rhode Island—USSC: 5.31%, CS: 4.56%, Ohio—USSC: 5.64%, CS: 2.53%, New Jersey—USSC: 6.16%, CS: 2.03%, Wisconsin—USSC: 2.51%, CS: 1.01%, Missouri—USSC: 3.02%, CS: 0.76%, Michigan—USSC: 2.27%, CS: 1.52%, Iowa—USSC: 0.99%, CS: 0.25%, Maryland—USSC: 0.97%, CS: 0.25%, Indiana—USSC: 2.41%, CS: 0.76%, Kentucky—USSC: 0.90%, CS: 1.01%, Maine—USSC: 1.37%, CS: 1.52%, Vermont—USSC: 0.89%, CS: 1.01%,

Table 6. State affiliation of all 395 correspondents, expressed in both numbers and percentages.[100]

STATE	PERCENTAGE	NO. OF CORRESPONDENTS
New York	40.51%	160
Massachusetts	16.71%	66
Pennsylvania	16.46%	65
Illinois	5.32%	21
Ohio	2.53%	10
Rhode Island	2.53%	10
Connecticut	2.03%	8
New Jersey	2.03%	8
New Hampshire	1.77%	7
Maine	1.52%	6
Michigan	1.52%	6
Kentucky	1.01%	4
Vermont	1.01%	4
Wisconsin	1.01%	4
Indiana	0.76%	3
Louisiana	0.76%	3
Missouri	0.76%	3
Delaware	0.51%	2

Minnesota—USSC: 0.79%, CS: 0%, New Hampshire—USSC: 1.87%, CS: 1.77%, District of Columbia—USSC: 0.48%, CS: 0.25%. Delaware—USSC: 0.40%, CS: 0.51%, Kansas—USSC: 0.75%, CS: 0.51%. The only majorly surprising comparison here is Massachusetts (see n26 above), and it raises the possibility that the U.S. Sanitary Commission estimates of Irish service from that state are a severe underestimate.

[100] In the case of naval service, state of assignation was based on location of enlistment. The final total includes four assignations that could not be determined with certainty, but were allocated based on probability, taking into consideration other information. These include two for New York, one for Pennsylvania and one for Illinois.

Table 6. (Continued).

Kansas	0.51%	2
District of Columbia	0.25%	1
Iowa	0.25%	1
Maryland	0.25%	1

State of affiliation was not necessarily the same as community of origin. In an effort to ascertain the latter, an examination of the county and state where the pensions were initially claimed was undertaken. Of the 395 correspondents, this detail was available for 387. A total of nine addresses were in Ireland, with two in England and two in Canada. The remaining 374 were initially being paid out in America (Table 7). That so few pensions were claimed outside of the United States is itself a measure of the low return rate of Irish immigrants after their departure across the Atlantic.[101]

[101] Only 219 military pensions are recorded as being claimed in Ireland in the 1883, despite the scale of Irish service. See U.S. Senate, *List of Pensioners on the Roll, January 1, 1883*, volume 5, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), 638-640; Damian Shiels, "The Long Arm of War: Exploring the 19th-Century Ulster Emigrant Experience through American Civil War Pension Files" in Patrick Fitzgerald, Christine Kinealy and Gerard Moran (eds) *Irish Hunger and Migration: Myth, Memory and Memorialization*, (West Haven, Connecticut: Quinnipiac University Press, 2015), 146.

Table 7. American counties where pensions of Irish American Civil War correspondents were claimed. Only those representing one percent and above are included. Derived from pension location information for 374 American based correspondents.[102]

STATE	COUNTY	PERCENTAGE	NO. OF CORRESPONDENTS
New York	New York	18.45%	69
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	14.17%	53
Massachusetts	Suffolk	7.75%	29
New York	Kings	5.88%	22
Massachusetts	Middlesex	3.74%	14
Rhode Island	Providence	3.21%	12
Massachusetts	Essex	2.67%	10
Pennsylvania	Allegheny	2.41%	9
New York	Niagara	2.41%	9
New York	Monroe	2.14%	8
Massachusetts	Norfolk	1.87%	7
Massachusetts	Worcester	1.87%	7
Illinois	Cook	1.60%	6
Ohio	Hamilton	1.34%	5
New York	Rensselaer	1.34%	5
Connecticut	New Haven	1.07%	4
Maine	Penobscot	1.07%	4
New York	Columbia	1.07%	4

[102] The primary reason that no pension address was available for a small number of the correspondents is based on the fact that their letters were included in files that did not directly relate to them (e.g. they were submitted in support of another Irish American's claim). The counties and percentages below one percent, but which had more than one representative correspondent are as follows: Albany (New York) 0.80%, Erie (New York) 0.80%, Essex (New Jersey) 0.80%, Milwaukee (Wisconsin) 0.80%, Oneida (New York) 0.80%, Oswego (New York) 0.80%, Queens (New York) 0.80%, Westchester (New York) 0.80%, Allegany (New York) 0.53%, Aroostook (Maine) 0.53%, Baltimore (Maryland) 0.53%, Cambria (Pennsylvania) 0.53%, Cayuga (New York) 0.53%, Clinton (New York) 0.53%, Hillsborough (New Hampshire) 0.53%, New London (Connecticut) 0.53%, Passaic (New Jersey) 0.53%, Rutland (Vermont) 0.53%, Washington (District of Columbia) 0.53%, Wayne (Michigan) 0.53%. A further 49 counties were represented by a single correspondent.

The United States county analysis further confirms the overwhelmingly urban origins of Irish American servicemen, conforming with what is known about Irish population distribution in the 1860s North. Almost one in five of the correspondent pensions were claimed in New York City alone, with significant concentrations around Philadelphia, Boston (Suffolk), and Brooklyn (Kings). The Greater Boston area and manufacturing centres such as Lowell and Providence are also among the best represented (Middlesex and Providence counties respectively).[103] Fewer pensions were active in the Midwest. One of the chief reasons behind this was the recent migration of many of the correspondents to the region, younger generations who had moved westward in search of opportunity. For example the pensions of Barney Carr, Michael Daly, James Fitzgerald, John Fitzpatrick and John Lynch were all secured by parents in New York, even though each had served in Illinois regiments.[104]

The concentration of pensions in the major Eastern urban Irish American enclaves provides some indication as to the extent of losses those communities suffered during the conflict. These fatalities were tied to the fortunes of a wide array of units, and not singularly bound to attrition in marquee formations like the Irish Brigade. When one considers the overrepresentation of Irish Americans in the Union military in places like New York City, the scale and consistency of death notifications must have quickly become an overwhelmingly frequent occurrence among what was a highly cohesive group. The ramifications of this both politically and in terms of potential community resentment serves to add further context and nuance to our understanding of the factors that led to seismic events such as the 1863 New York City Draft Riots.

[103] The prevalence of Massachusetts correspondents is again noteworthy, particularly when compared to Pennsylvania, and given the low figures credited to the state by Apthorp Gould.
[104] WC100612; WC143339; WC23216; WC56115; WC54548.

Those Irish Americans who donned Federal uniform were distributed more widely through the Union military than any other ethnic group. This range and diversity in experience is borne out by the fact that the 395 men served in more than 270 different units, credited to 22 different states and districts.[105] The majority (more than 68 percent) were members of volunteer infantry or militia regiments, with a little over 82 percent members of a volunteer formation of one form or another (Table 8). Just under 13 percent were in naval service, with slightly more than five percent in the regulars. A total of 64 servicemen or 16 percent were identified as members of ethnic Irish regiments; at least four men who died having moved on to non-ethnic outfits had previously seen ethnic service.[106]

Table 8. Final branch of service of the 395 Irish American correspondents.[107]

BRANCH OF SERVICE	NUMBER OF CORRESPONDENTS
Volunteer Infantry/Militia	272
Volunteer Cavalry	28
Volunteer Light Artillery	6
Volunteer Heavy Artillery	14
Volunteer Engineers	4
Volunteer Pontoniers	1

[105] Made up of 21 states and the District of Columbia. The total number of formations the men served in was greatly in excess of 270. Although 274 different units were represented by the files, the majority of naval personnel served on multiple naval vessels during their enlistment, and a number of those in the army also spent time in different regiments.

[106] The ethnic units in which they served, in order of greatest number of correspondents, are as follows: 9th Massachusetts Infantry (9), 63rd New York Infantry (7), 155th New York Infantry (6), 164th New York Infantry (6), 69th New York Infantry (5), 69th Pennsylvania Infantry (5), 28th Massachusetts Infantry (4), 10th Ohio Infantry (3), 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry (3), 23rd Illinois Infantry (3), 88th New York Infantry (3), 182nd New York Infantry (3), 69th New York State Militia (2), 116th Pennsylvania Infantry (1), 35th Indiana Infantry (1), 9th Connecticut Infantry (1), 37th New York Infantry (1), 90th Illinois Infantry (1).

[107] A number of men had served in multiple units, sometimes across different branches of service. In such instances the unit in which their main Civil War service was rendered was selected.

Table 8. (Continued).

Sub-Total Volunteers	*325*
Regular Infantry	13
Regular Cavalry	3
Regular Artillery	5
Sub-Total Regulars	***21***
United States Navy	43
United States Marine Corps	6
Sub-Total Navy	***49***

2.2.4 Nativity of the Correspondents

Analysis of the backgrounds of the letter writers—undertaken in order to confirm Irish ethnicity—revealed the nativity make-up of the group. As has been highlighted, the Irish America to which they belonged was a community founded on familial and ethnic affiliation rather than on place of birth. Slightly over 35 percent of the correspondents for whom nativity could be established were born into Irish families outside the island of Ireland (Figure 2). Unsurprisingly, most of them had entered the world in America, with those from the United States representing a little under 28 percent of the letter writers of known nativity. Interestingly, this correlates precisely with the estimate that some 70,000 of the *c*. 250,000 Irish American Union servicemen had been born in America, which similarly represents 28 percent of that total. A little more than seven percent of the correspondents had been born elsewhere; in Canada, England, Scotland, Australia, or while their families had been crossing the Atlantic. Of those identified as born in the United States, state of nativity was established for just over 91 percent.

Again New York (41.84 percent) dominates, followed by Massachusetts (22.45 percent) and Pennsylvania (20.41 percent).[108]

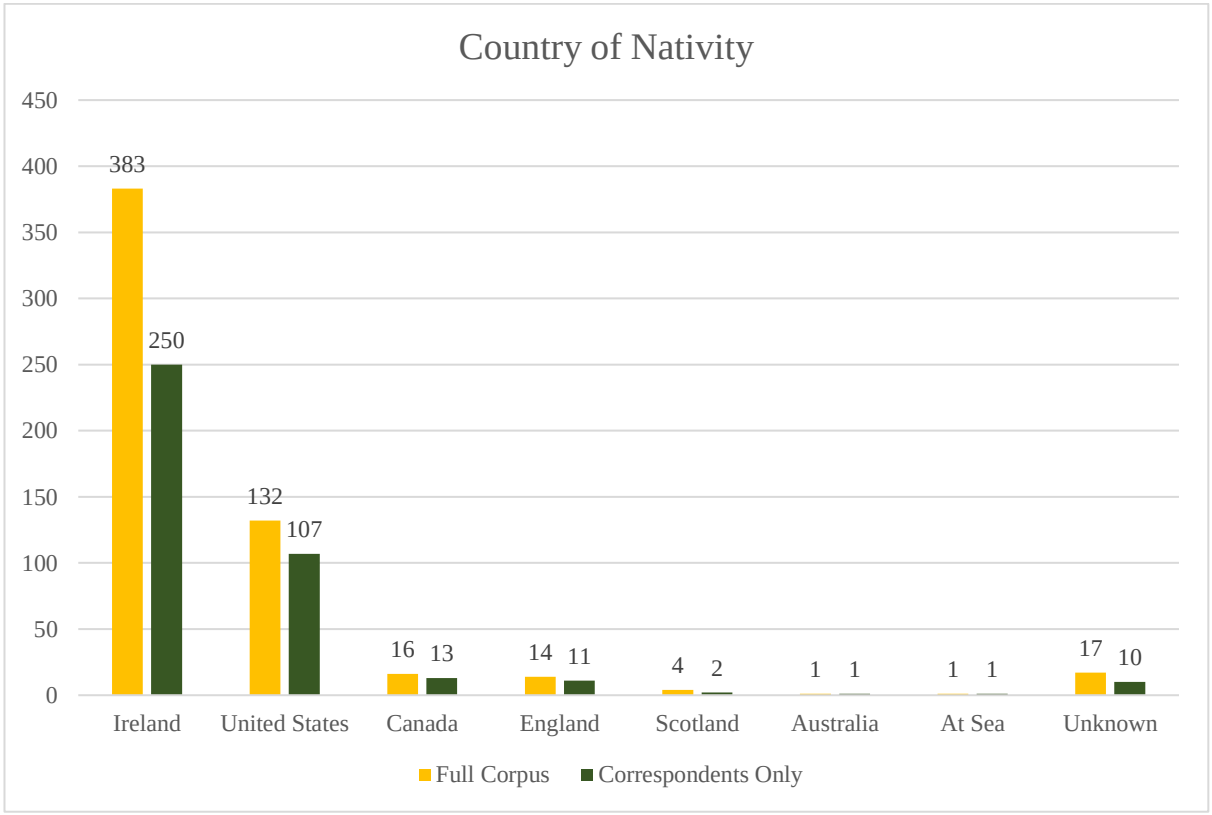

Figure 2. Country of nativity of the soldiers and sailors (Full Corpus and Correspondents Only) expressed by number.[109]

Those born in Ireland represented just under 65 percent of the writers for whom nativity was established.[110] County of origin is notoriously difficult to confirm for Irish-born

[108] Of the 98 American born for whom state of nativity was established, the percentage breakdown by state is as follows: New York 41.84%, Massachusetts 22.45%, Pennsylvania 20.41%, Vermont 6.12%, Rhode Island 3.06%, Illinois 2.04%, Maine 2.04%, Connecticut 1.02%, New Jersey 1.02%. One each of the individuals assigned to New York and Vermont were based on probability, taking into consideration other documentation.

[109] In 12 instances for the "Full Corpus" and nine instances for the "Correspondents Only" the nativity data is based on probable location of birth, founded on additional information gathered relating to each of the individuals concerned.

[110] Again, if these nativity proportions held true for Irish American Union service as a whole, it would indicate that between 240,000 and 250,000 Irish Americans served the North during the American Civil War.

servicemen, given the propensity for birthplace to be listed simply as "Ireland" during the American Civil War. Nonetheless, county of nativity was established for 209 (54.71 percent) of the Full Corpus, and 151 (60.4 percent) of the Correspondents.[111] County Cork, Ireland's most populous county and the one which sent out the highest number of immigrants in the years immediately prior to 1861, dominates (Figure 3).[112] At least one letter writer was identified from each of the 32 counties on the island.

[111] These figures include three county nativities that were assigned based on probability, taking into consideration supporting documentation (two of the three probable county determinations formed part of both the Full Corpus and Correspondents databases).

[112] Analysis of Irish immigration to New York between 1846 and 1854 indicates those from Cork were the most numerous. See Anbinder and McCaffrey, "Which Irish Men and Women Immigrated", 627. The dominance of Cork was also a feature of the analysis of Irish American soldiers conducted by James Zibro, though Ryan Keating's examination revealed a more mixed picture. See Zibro, "The Life of Paddy Yank", 59-62; Keating, *Shades of Green*, 223-225.

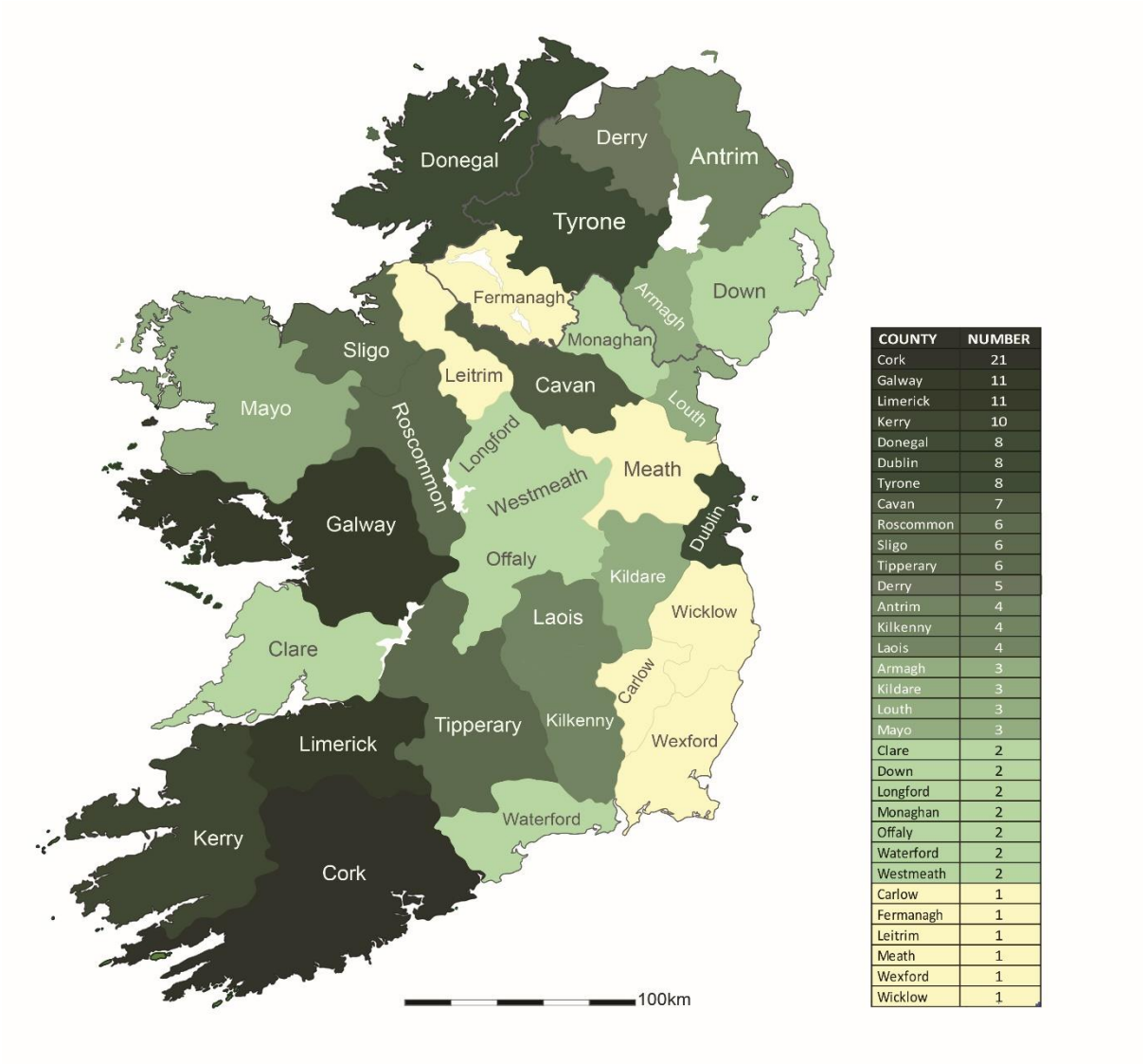

Figure 3. Known counties of nativity of Irish American correspondents, coloured by density (Sara Nylund).

From a provincial perspective, the largest body of correspondents could be traced to Munster (34.44 percent), followed by Ulster (26.49 percent), Leinster (21.19 percent) and Connacht (17.88 percent).[113] The ratios are generally comparable with relative levels of outward migration from those provinces that can be traced through the 1850s,

[113] Two of the Leinster assignations were based on probable county of nativity, following analysis of ancillary documentation. Munster's dominance is in line with the position of that province as the greatest source of Irish American immigrants during this period. For a discussion see Doyle, "The Remaking of Irish-America", 734-736.

with the exception of Connacht, where the proportion of correspondents outstrips that figure (Figure 4). However, Connacht had been a major source of immigrants at the height of the Famine (when detailed origin statistics were not being gathered), and this likely goes some way towards explaining the discrepancy.[114] Taken together, these figures provide further evidence of the representative nature of the 395 correspondents, who hailed from all over Ireland in similar proportions to the known levels of provincial emigration to the United States.

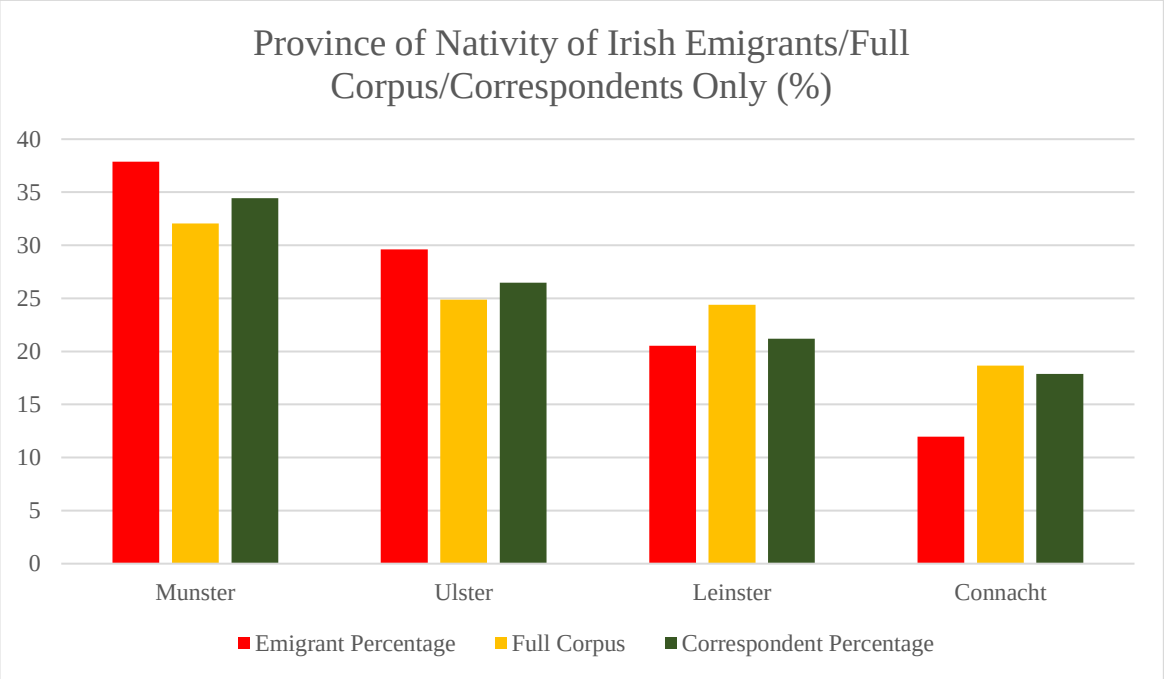

Figure 4. Proportion of Irish emigrants to the United States from each of the four provinces from May 1851 to 1860 (Emigrant Percentage) compared with proportion of Irish correspondents identified from each province (Full Corpus and Correspondents Only).[115]

[114] Many of these Connacht immigrants originated in Galway, Ireland's second most populous county in 1841. See Anbinder and McCaffrey, "Which Irish Men and Women Immigrated", 627. The relatively low numbers of men for whom provincial nativity could be established adds a note of caution to these figures. In real terms, 52 correspondents were identified as being born in Munster, 40 in Ulster, 32 in Leinster and 27 in Connacht.

[115] Provincial emigration proportions from May 1851 to 1860 are based on figures supplied in Table 2 of Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 570-571.

As with the occupation data, all is often not what it seems with respect to nativity. Detailed analysis reveals frequent discrepancies between place of birth as stated on the census and that recorded on military records. The overwhelming majority of these inconsistencies are unidirectional—a soldier or sailor recorded as Irish-born on the census was entered as American-born when joining the military (for a detailed discussion, see Chapter Five). The instances of altered nativity seem to be particularly prevalent among those who chose naval service, but evidently it was a common practice throughout the northern military. Benjamin Apthorp Gould admitted that in many cases upon enlistment, "place of residence was frequently given in the stead of place of birth."[116] Patently, such widespread under-recording of Irish nativity has significant implications for the scale of Irish American service within the Union military. The frequency with which these discrepancies were encountered suggests the probability that large numbers of soldiers and sailors who were recorded as American-born were actually native to Ireland. Whether intentional or otherwise, this has served to further supress the true totals for Irish-born in Union service, adding more evidence in support of the argument that Irish Americans were over-represented within the northern military during the American Civil War.

2.2.5 Age & Marital Status of the Correspondents

Perhaps the youngest correspondent identified in the corpus was William Carroll of the 7th Connecticut Infantry, who was no more than 15-years-old when he enlisted, and may have been as young as 14.[117] The oldest was Felix Mooney. The 61st New York Infantry soldier was approximately 54-years-old when he succumbed to wounds and

[116] Apthorp Gould, *Investigations*, 15.
[117] WC92361. William was recorded as 13-years-old on the 1860 census. See 1860 U.S. Census, Middletown, Middlesex, Connecticut, NARA.

disease in 1862.[118] They represent either end of the age-spectrum among the correspondents (Figure 5). As their cases suggest, there is little doubt that many Irish American boys and men who were both under and overage lied in order to enlist. Overall, the typical Irish American letter writer during the American Civil War was relatively young. While the average age of white Union volunteers was 25.8 years, that of the Irish American correspondents was 24.16.[119] Those who took up their pens also tended to be considerably younger than the average Irish-born volunteer, who may have been as old as 28.1 years.[120]

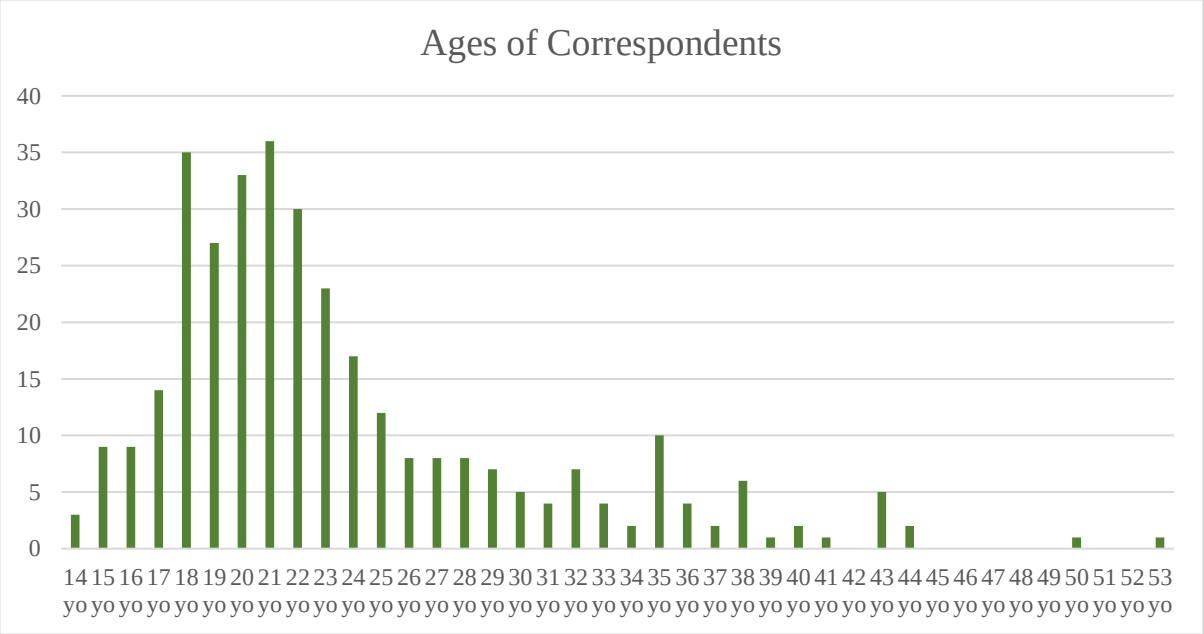

Figure 5. Ages of correspondents at enlistment.

[118] WC98996; CWMRA of Felix Mooney, 61st New York Infantry, NYSA.
[119] Apthorp Gould, *Investigations*, 35. The median age for white Union volunteers was 23.477. The average age of Irish American correspondents is based on the 336 for whom age-data was identified.
[120] Zibro, "The Life of Paddy Yank", 39-40. Zibro looked at elements of the 9th Massachusetts Infantry, 63rd New York Infantry, 69th Pennsylvania Infantry, 90th Illinois Infantry, 13th and 39th Illinois Infantry, and 59th New York Infantry. He found some variance between regiments, with the median age being 27.

A little less than one in four of the correspondents were married, with the remainder entering military service as single men.[121] The figures for Irish Americans who had spouses at home is below the estimated 30 percent provided for Union soldiers as a whole.[122] Given the Irish tendency to marry later (See Chapter One), this discrepancy is explained by the younger average age of the correspondents, a lower age profile that can be explained by the greater rates of literacy prevalent among more youthful Irish Americans. This is borne out by the marital status figures for the Full Corpus, which indicates that 36.80 percent of the entire group were married, 63.20 percent single. Much of the contemporary correspondence related to the former was in the form of death notifications written to their widows by comrades and medical staff.

2.3 The Question of Class

Historiographical discussion and debate on Irish American participation in the American Civil War is consistently—sometimes exclusively—framed around ethnicity. Invariably, when seeking to explain Irish American enlistment and motivations, it is towards ethnicity that historians have primarily turned.[123] Likewise, it is in issues of ethnicity that explanations for a supposed flagging Irish American commitment to the cause of Union have chiefly been sought.[124] It goes without saying that ethnicity was

[121] Marriage information was retrieved for all 395 correspondents. 77.22 percent were single, 22.78 percent married at the time of enlistment.

[122] Holmes, "'Such Is the Price We Pay'", 174. Similarly, James McPherson found that 29 percent of the 647 Union letter writers he examined were married. See McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, viii.

[123] This focus on ethnicity is largely symptomatic of the relatively sparse attention given over to immigrant groups in most scholarly analysis of the northern Civil War soldier, on which see Keller, "Flying Dutchmen and Drunken Irishmen". While economic need is generally mentioned as one of a number of motivators, class often elicits little further consideration.

[124] See e.g. Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 3-4. While acknowledging their working-class status, Ural frames her argument primarily in terms of ethnicity, e.g. "the interest of Ireland and the Union", and "their interests as Irishmen". During the Civil War, class and ethnicity were frequently tied together. Mark A. Lause has identified contemporary efforts to directly equate working class agitation with what were perceived to be the ethnically "dangerous classes". Lause argues that

and is an intrinsic element of the Irish American story. But there was another factor that was just as influential at shaping these men's Civil War experience, one that is hammered home consistently in the demographic profile of the correspondents—class. Although it has received only scant attention, many of the challenges and prejudices Irish Americans faced during their service and many of the decisions they made were the product not just of who they were, but where they sat on the social spectrum of the United States.

The identified correspondents are overwhelmingly working class in origin. Indeed, among those white groups most commonly delineated in northern service, Irish Americans were almost certainly the most uniformly working class. In a wider sense, the lower classes are perhaps the least understood of all northern demographics during the Civil War, largely because their voices are greatly under-represented in the surviving historical record. This is despite the fact that they made up 60 percent of organisations like the Army of the Potomac, a force where 40 percent of the rank and file had worked in unskilled occupations.[125] Little analysis has been undertaken on what motivated these northern working-class whites to enlist—particularly those from urban backgrounds.[126] Similarly, there is much to be done on what influenced their decisions to remain or depart the service, or on how their commitment ebbed and flowed through time. This prompts a recognition that Irish Americans arguably represent the largest and most readily delineated urban working-class white group in northern service. It also

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the form labor struggles took during the war resembled those of the antebellum period (though differing in composition and scale), but during the war, employers sought to undermine them by framing them as riotous ethnic disruptions—a measure in itself of the degree of purchase nativist sentiment had during the conflict. See Mark A. Lause, *Free Labor: The Civil War and the Making of an American Working Class* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 76, 80.

[125] See Glatthaar, "A Tale of Two Armies", 329.

[126] Analysis such as that recently conducted by scholars such as William Marvel and Joseph T. Glatthaar is going some way towards beginning to redress this imbalance. See William Marvel, *Lincoln's Mercenaries: Economic Motivation Among Union Soldiers During the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2018); Glatthaar, "A Tale of Two Armies".

forces a consideration that a more complete understanding of the actions and reactions of Irish Americans during the conflict may lie not in examining the influence of their ethnicity, but their class. Without confidently being able to determine the extent to which Irish Americans differed from their non-ethnic urban working-class comrades during the conflict, the degree to which their ethnicity made them exceptional remains open to significant debate. Unless and until further work is undertaken on the urban working poor in the Union military, it will remain extremely difficult to determine the degree to which their experience was an outlier based on ethnicity, or was conformist in terms of social position.

It was from amongst the lower classes of cities like New York and Brooklyn that the largest Irish American contribution to the war effort came, and who commensurately suffered the greatest losses of any Irish communities in the United States. Their pervasiveness in the ranks of the North's urban regiments saw them quickly become a target for those with southern sympathies. Typical were the sentiments of Adalbert Volck, a pro-Confederate artist, who complained that many of the early war Union volunteers came "mostly from the very dregs of the people" forcing the "best blood" of the South to "fight the scum of the North."[127] In 1863 Volck visualised these "dregs" in an etching entitled *Enlistment of Sickles's Brigade*—a brigade filled with Irish Americans—which depicts a largely Irish group of ne'er do wells congregating around the Five Points.

[127] Frederick S. Voss, "Adalbert Volck: The South's Answer to Thomas Nast", *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 2:3 (1988), 74.

"Enlistment of Sickles's Brigade", an 1863 etching by pro-Confederate artist Adalbert Volck (University of Michigan).

Neither is it necessary to look towards southern commentary to reveal the significance of class for Irish Americans during the Civil War. Its importance is underlined by commentary from within the Irish community itself, further underlining the variance that existed within the 250,000 men who saw service. When Lieutenant John Conway was killed with the Irish Brigade at the Battle of Antietam, his brother-in-law Charles Brady counselled his newly widowed sister in Brooklyn "to keep away from all the low Irish and not be lead away by them you may think they are for your good they will bring you to ruin…"[128] As a successful farmer with a real and personal estate valued at $2550, Charles Brady no doubt felt in a position to offer such words of wisdom.[129] His greatest fear was that his sister, in remaining connected to Irish culture and community, would be led astray by the multitudes of working-class Irish Americans who surrounded her in

[128] Charles Brady to "Dear Sister" 5 October 1862, WC2415.
[129] 1860 U.S. Census, Skaneateles, Onondaga, New York, NARA.

Brooklyn and New York City. The upwardly-mobile farmer was giving voice to the stratification in Irish American society that would later see individuals defined as either "lace-curtain" or "shanty" Irish.[130] Captain John Lynch of the Irish Brigade, who firmly considered himself part of the refined middle-class, further articulated this class distinction—and how he viewed the working-class men under his charge as fundamentally different—in an 1861 letter home:

> we have the men under our thumbs and as docile as lambs as for Company "C" I make the fellows jump like young Kittens the Hard ones can hardly understand it they thought me a milk sop only fit to be tied to your apron strings (in fact I understand they made use of that expression) but faith they caught a Tartar Lieut Ryan himself thought I was too fine gentleman to make a good Camp Soldier and says he is most agreably disappointed both him and the Company think me now a good officer, since I have brought them to their senses.[131]

The lack of working-class Irish American correspondence from the American Civil War has necessitated an over reliance on the words of the Irish officer classes to represent the ethnic experience of the conflict. But as correspondence such as that of John Lynch suggests, these two sets of men, though they shared ethnicity and were aligned on many issues, were not the same. In this regard, the most important aspect of the newly identified correspondence is not the extent of its regional representativeness or the fact that it includes both Irish and foreign-born "Irish Americans". Though both are significant, the greatest strength the corpus possesses is its overwhelmingly working-class makeup. In the chapters to come, it is the voices of these ordinary Irish American men that will be heard.

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[130] William V. Shannon, *The American Irish: A Political and Social Portrait*, Second Edition (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 142.

[131] John C. Lynch to "My dear darling Mother" 17 December 1861, WC94532. Emphasis in original.

Chapter Three

Life in Uniform

The last letter Barney Carr ever wrote came from Georgia. It was headed "in Front of they Enemys Brest works and they are a shooting at us all they time, This date June they 20th 1864". Part way through the lines he was penning to his mother, he was forced to stop. When he next had a chance to take up his pen, Barney vividly portrayed the reason for his abrupt hiatus: "I have had to stop writhing we are a Lying on they Line battle and there are 12 Pices of Canons in front of us and they are a shelling they Rebs and that draws they Rebles fire and it is a horrible Plase to be in Canonballs are a flying thick round us and they shells are a screaming in they air and through the woods Cuting they timber and Earth in all directions". Weeks of hard campaigning and almost constant exposure to death had been wearing away at Barney's psychological wellbeing, and his letter oscillated between reassurances—"by grace god I still live yet and am well and harty in they bargin"—and exhausted resignation—"Dear mother theses are hard times nothing but fighting Everey day and killing of men I am a geting Tired of it".[1] Seven days later, Barney Carr became the only member of his regiment to lose his life in the assault on Kennesaw Mountain.

Without an awareness of Barney Carr's backstory, there is nothing in his letter that marks him out as an Irish American. In place of an Irish assisted emigrant from Co. Derry, what emerges is an impression of a war weary teenager facing his own mortality on the firing line, pouring out his thoughts to his mother, lest it be his last opportunity to do so.[2] They are words that could have been written by any number of servicemen, of

[1] Barney Carr to "Dear Parent" 20 June 1864, WC100612.
[2] Damian Shiels, *The Forgotten Irish: Irish Emigrant Experiences in America* (Dublin: The History Press Ireland, 2016), 166-174.

any background, North or South. When we raise our gaze beyond the ethnic units to encompass the full breadth of experience of *c.* 250,000 Irish American servicemen across the North, what becomes apparent is that there were few sharp edges which marked Irish American service apart. Instead, what is evident is the extent to which their individual military experience was in many aspects comparable to that of other ordinary white men under arms.

As was the case for almost every frontline Union and Confederate servicemen, there was a series of shared experiences and challenges which shaped these men's lives. In the early days, each had to grapple with adapting to military life, and sooner or later come face to face with the realities of combat and violent death. For the majority, faith played a role in how they navigated these events, and how they perceived the war itself. So too did their interactions with home, which for most men remained their most important relationship of all during the conflict. Everyone who wished to maintain that relationship with their families and communities had to engage with the written word, often to a greater extent than they had ever done before. This chapter is concerned with examining these common denominators of Civil War service from an Irish American perspective. It reveals both the widespread similarities with their non-ethnic comrades, but also the points of divergence and differentiation, which were often subtle, but sometimes more marked.

3.1 Adapting to Military Life

Although the voices of ordinary Irish Americans are largely absent from scholarly works on the Civil War soldier, historians who have studied Union correspondence would recognise much of what the Irish had to say about military life. They filled their letters with descriptions of their camps and drill, outlined their military movements, and

sometimes shared their experience of combat. They ruminated on the weather, on their lack of access to good food and tobacco, or on the cost of it where it was available. They grumbled about military life and its hardships. Some took to the military like ducks to water; others regretted their enlistment almost immediately. The experience of each man was different, and their views, morale and outlook ebbed and flowed through the course of the war.

Like all other servicemen, following enlistment Irish Americans had to adapt to their new routines, a topic that dominated their early letters, as it did those of all new volunteer soldiers. Cork-born shoemaker John Toomey of the 15th Massachusetts Infantry's description of his day in late 1861 was typical:

> …we get up at sunrise, and wash and clean up our quarters then we have to drill from 7 to 8 Oclock with our knapsacks on then we come in and get our breakfast we go out again at 10 Oclock and drill to 11 ½ Oclock we have dinner at 12 ½ Oclock we go out to drill at 1 ½ Oclock in the afternoon and come in at 2 ½ Oclock we go out to Batalion drill at 3 Oclock and come in at 4 ½ Oclock then we have to go out on dress parade and when we get in it is About dark so you see we dont have much time to loaf.[3]

Many adapted well, particularly during their first weeks of service when life in uniform remained a novelty. With large numbers already used to the long hours and the punishing physical toll of working class life, it might be expected that Irish Americans acclimatised better than most. This was the case for some, who welcomed the downtime that life in camp and barracks afforded, not to mention the regular rations. John Riley, who entered the military as a labourer, was thrilled with his decision to join the United States Marine Corps in 1861. He informed his parents that he was "well satisfied with the life of a Marine I never had work since I was able to work that I like as well as this we only have three hours drill a day…"[4] Former factory worker Charles O'Donnell, who also became a Marine, was equally pleased at the contrast between his old life in an

[3] John Toomey to "Dear Father And mother" 10 November 1861, WC5388.
[4] John Riley to "Dear Father & Mother" 10 July 1861, Navy WC2821.

overcrowded Philadelphia tenement and his new surroundings in barracks. “i get plenty to eat”, he informed those at home, adding that “every one hase a bed to himself”—a luxury his family did not enjoy. The ready availability of necessities was also a new experience for Charles: “i dont want any thing the canteen opens twist a day and i kin get any thing i want”.[5] Such enthusiasm was not always restricted to early war enlistees. Former mason James Finigan was not long in in the 4th New York Heavy Artillery in 1864 before he was confiding to his parents that “I Would sooner be out heare than home sodiering is a nice Life”.[6]

Urban Irish Americans who were used to cramped and variable living conditions often reported an initial improvement in their health and physique. James Leahey, a Limerick-born upholsterer living in Charlestown, Massachusetts, told his wife three months after enlistment: “my health is very good and my eyes is as well as ever in fact i am stouter and stronger now than you ever see me”.[7] John Deegan, a former coal weigher serving with the 19th Maine Infantry, revealed to his sister after his first winter in camp: “I am in the best of health and in fact have been ever since I come out here I never was so fat in my life before…”.[8] Another who felt soldiering compared well to his lot in civilian life was Offaly native William Delaney. “you ask me how i like it Down South i like it” he told those at home. “As for my Health i never Got better although i sleep On the ground but i Cannot Complain for my bed was not much better the last few weeks that i was i East Albany”.[9]

Nonetheless, a working class background was no guarantee of an easy adaptation to a life of soldiering. As with other groups, plenty of Irish Americans struggled greatly with

[5] Charles O’Donnell to “my dear mother” 7 August 1862, Navy WC2479.
[6] James Finigan to “My Deare father” 19 April 1864, WC110019.
[7] James Leahey to “Dear wife” 25 October 1861, WC2537.
[8] John Deegan to “Sister Kate” 28 April 1864, WC68309.
[9] William Delaney to “Dear Mother” 6 November 1861, WC8306.

the transition. A few days after his enlistment in the summer of 1862, Canadian-born Irish American carpenter Michael Martin poured out his misery to his wife. "you cant tink ho I suffer here I have to Sleep on the bare ground wet al day last week I had to sleep on the ground and it poured raining all nit".[10] Martin had not signed up for ideological reasons, and he regretted joining the army. In the context of both early and late war recruits, early dissatisfaction was more readily expressed by those who had been less enthusiastic about their enlistment. "i dont belive i can stand soldiering" William Flaherty from Co. Galway told his mother shortly after signing up as a reluctant substitute in late 1863. Three weeks later he was "commenceing to think that Soldiering wont agree with me but i will try to Stick it out i am in hopes this war will be over before next winter".[11]

As Irish Americans transitioned from new volunteers and recruits into veterans, they fully embraced the age-old military tradition of grumbling about their lot. This was a common theme for all American Civil War soldiers.[12] It was especially true of those who had experienced hard marches and taxing campaigns. Christopher McGiff, a New York City moulder, told his mother in 1863 that "we eren our money hard in the first plase in laing out in the street and the rain beats on us a soldres life is hard thay say a sallors life is hard but it caint coame up to our life".[13] Co. Louth sailor John Buckley might have disagreed. He was distinctly unimpressed when he was transferred to the ironclad USS *Weehawken* in 1863, venting to his sister:

> I assure you it is not very pleasant to be on one of these Monitors I have not had A dry foot since I came here when ever I do any work on deck the sea wets me

[10] Michael Martin to "My dear wife" 21 July 1862, WC16416.
[11] William Flaherty to "Dear Mother" 7 January 1864 and William Flaherty to "Dear Mother" 28 January 1864, WC117088.
[12] See e.g. Joseph T. Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman's Troops in the Savannah and Carolinas Campaigns* (Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 42-43; McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 27.
[13] Christopher McGiff to "My Dear mother" 25 April 1863, WC114360.

> from my head to my foot…the sea is always one or two foot deep over her deck in fact they are not fit for men to live on…[14]

The men were just as quick to grumble about their officers. Just as good officers inspired them, little disillusioned the Irish American serviceman as much as when they perceived their commanders to be corrupt, incompetent or overly disciplinarian. As was so often the case with Civil War correspondents, Irish Americans were wont to discuss the bad far more than the good. What reverberates through their commentary is a clear belief that they felt very much the equal of anyone in shoulder-straps, another feature they shared with their non-ethnic comrades.[15] In 1862 Thomas Keating of the 9th New York State Militia was despondent with his Company's lot, feeling that "us Poor solders are Rob of our food and gold and the Capt Pocket the Money and if We say anything about it We are Put in the guard house and a round iron ball Put around you foot".[16] Matthew Eagan had a similarly negative view of some of his Excelsior Brigade Captains. He considered that if defeat came, it would "not be the Private soldiers fault" but "the fault of Officers". He continued: "there are Cap^{ts} getting pay from Government that Knows no more about Commanding Comp^{ys} no more than the Child that was never Born all they want is to make money and rob the poor soldier of what is thare due".[17] When Kilkenny native Jeremiah Keenan heard that his despised former First Lieutenant and another ex-comrade were seeking to recruit a new company back in Rochester, he couldn't contain his anger. He wrote to his brother: "I tell you what I would do sooner to enlist in that company I would drown myself first sooner then to enlist with that scoundral". He advised his sibling that if either officer approached him he was to

[14] John Buckley to "Dear Sister" 29 November 1863, Navy WC4219.
[15] On this feeling of equality, see Lorien Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs: Manhood, Honor, and Violence in the Union Army* (New York University Press, 2010), 153.
[16] Thomas Keating to "My Deare Mother" 24 January [no date, but 1862], WC88338.
[17] Matthew Eagan to "Dear Wife" 10 November 1861, WC25637.

respond with “a kick in the ass and spit in his face…I would rather have any one belonging to me shot to death sooner than to enlist with any of them two fellows”.[18]

Difficulties with officers were not restricted to non-ethnic regiments. Many men in Irish units were forced to look on as often bitter struggles developed among Irish officers for control within ethnic units, sometimes jeopardising the stability of the entire formation. Just such a dispute erupted in the nascent Irish Brigade, bringing the Colonel of the 63rd New York and the line officers to “dagger points”. During the argument, the 63rd’s officers were persuaded to sign a memorial against Thomas Francis Meagher in the belief he was about to break up the regiment.[19] These disputes had the potential to drag in the men in the ranks, and even their home communities. They could also be long lasting. As the 9th Massachusetts was looking towards its discharge and return home in 1864, bitter factions within the regiment threatened to turn what was supposed to be a momentous occasion into a violent debacle. James Healy warned his family off attending their march through Boston, cautioning them to make sure to “not at any time keep close by them”. He explained that “there is two or three different parties in the Regt. some for and the most against the Colonel and it is expected there will be hot work if we go through places where some of the parties reside most especially through North End.”[20]

As well as navigating their line officers and the internal politics of their units, like everyone else Irish Americans were ultimately at the mercy of the decisions of their commanding generals. Here they proved just as quick to offer assessments on competence. Following the infamous Mud March of January 1863, William McIntyre

[18] Jeremiah Keenan to “Dear Mother” 17 April [no date, but 1863], WC14441.
[19] John C. Lynch to “My dear darling Mother” 21 January 1862, WC94532.
[20] James Healy to “Dear Parents” 7 April 1864, WC65439. For more on the background to these disputes see Samito (ed) *Commanding Boston's Irish Ninth*.

expressed his pleasure at the removal of Ambrose Burnside from the head of the Army of the Potomac, a General who William felt had turned his "Brigade into jack-asses or some other kind of animal". Still, he thought his replacement Joe Hooker was not the "right man" for command, instead advocating William Franklin or Edwin Sumner for the position "as they are better engineer's".[21] George B. McClellan enjoyed an unassailable position as the war's most revered army commander among Irish Americans, but there was also room for the appreciation of others, such as Ulysses S. Grant. In 1864, John O'Connor of the 151st New York Infantry voiced his delight with Grant's appointment. He was confident that "old Lee will have to look sharp" as they finally had "A good General at our head…that Lee can not out general".[22]

Sooner or later, most Irish Americans came face to face with the realities of war. The shock of first seeing dead bodies and witnessing the destructive force of projectiles on the human form prompted many to share those experiences on paper. This is unsurprising, as their initial encounters with mortality left a deep impression on most Civil War soldiers.[23] Patrick Carney, a Co. Tyrone carpenter in the 69th Pennsylvania, walked onto his first major battlefield at Fair Oaks. "i never Saw in my life time the sight i saw", he admitted, as he sought to convey the scale of death he had witnessed. "our Company was sent out yesterday afternoon to berry the Dead and and we ware ought 2 hours and we berried 46 Rebles".[24] Thomas Hagan spared his mother few of the gory details when he reported back on his initial impressions of death on the battlefield. "what you hear about the dead soldiers is true thare is some with their legs and arms and heads stuck up out of thair graves thare is a bird that we call the turkey hawk that caries

[21] William McIntyre to "Dear Father & Mother" 30 January 1862 [but 1863], WC45770.
[22] John O'Connor to "Dear mother" 18 March 1864, WC86354.
[23] See Earl J. Hess, *The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1997), 37.
[24] Patrick Carney to "Dear mother & Brothers & Sister" 3 June 1862, WC18510.

them off som times thay take a whole bodey off with them at a time."[25] Cork labourer Edmund Ford had his first taste of battle at Perryville. The experience remained seared into his mind when he wrote of it a month later. "in every diriction the ded bodys lein all around us…Some with there heds Cut of some there legs and arms it tuck them two days to pick them up…"[26] Another Corkman, former day labourer Daniel Driscoll, was equally affected by what he saw at Fort Hindman in the aftermath of the Battle of Arkansas Post. "it was horable to see the work that our shells had don", the USS *Cincinnati* sailor wrote, "there was horses and men Piled upon one Another compleetley torn to Peaces".[27]

As men grew used to the sights of the battlefield so they remarked on them less frequently. What emerged instead—as with Barney Carr—were indications of war weariness and battle fatigue.[28] The ordeal of the Peninsula had certainly taken its toll on James Dowd of the Irish Brigade. Following their withdrawal he confided to his wife: "we are out of the State of Virginia at last thank God safe I hope we will never get back to it again".[29] After their harrowing experience at Fredericksburg, another Irish Brigade soldier, William Dwyer from Co. Tipperary, responded negatively to rumours that they might have to renew the fight. He admitted "I don't want to see any more for to see all the men that fell there on the 13th of decr last it was a heart rending sight to see them falling all around me".[30] These sentiments were not static, and ebbed and flowed with the coming and going of severe battles and campaigns. Former day labourer John

[25] Thomas Hagan to "Dear Mother & sisters" 27 September 1863, WC51663.
[26] Edmund Ford to "Dear father and mother brothers and sisters" 16 November 1862, WC96716.
[27] Daniel Driscoll to "Father & Mother" 15 February 1863, Navy WC3265.
[28] As men's initial enthusiasm was replaced by growing pessimism there was a knock-on effect on discipline, see Steven J. Ramold, *Baring the Iron Hand: Discipline in the Union Army* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 53-69. On the psychological impact of the war on soldiers see e.g. Eric T. Dean, ""We Will All Be Lost and Destroyed": Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the Civil War" *Civil War History* 37:2 (1991), 138-153.
[29] James Dowd to "Dear wife" 4 September 1862, WC47691.
[30] William Dwyer to "Dear Mother" 23 January 1863, WC103233.

Dougherty, a patriotic soldier who in early September 1862 described the good spirits of the Irish Brigade in which he served as the "envy of the rest of the army" had written just six weeks earlier of his hope that "none of the boys will take it in to their head to list for soldiering is not what it is cracked up to be".[31] His July letter was penned during a period of low morale in the army, which had recently endured the Seven Days' Battles.

Some of those who enlisted later in the war provided the most candid combat accounts, shorn of all sentimentality. Thomas Reiley sent his mother a particularly visceral description of the panic and terror he felt when his 139th New York went into action at Bermuda Hundred in May 1864:

> "thare was a battery a little on our right, i heared a nuf of thare nose you can bet for them and the Rebs was blazing a way most afful…i can tell you i was most affule hot about an half houre i do not wish to be in such a place a gain i never thought i would git of that feald a live you must tink it was kind of cloce when the man alongside of me got it right in the arme next to me when he got hit i thought shure i was hit to for he let a yel out of him and turnd around to git of the feald when he ran right bang aganst me and over i when i wen i thought shure i was gon in but i found out thay was nothing the matter with me…[32]

Irish Americans varied greatly in how much they were prepared to divulge with respect to their experiences in action. This is unsurprising, given that many men were writing to their sisters, wives and mothers, and naturally sought to shield them from the realities of the dangers they faced. Those who did discuss battle almost never portrayed their experiences through a filter of heroism and sentimentality; the overriding tendency for these working-class men was either to relay events in a descriptive matter-of-fact fashion, or to lay bare some of what they felt and experienced with a sense of realism. This is a feature that has previously been identified in the writings of semi-literate,

[31]John Dougherty to Dear Mother" 4 September 1862 and John Dougherty to "Dear Mother" 19 July 1862, both within WC93207.
[32] Thomas Reiley to "Dear Mother" 26 May 1864, WC126607.

working-class servicemen, no matter their ethnicity.[33] It remained true for Irish Americans regardless of whether or not they served in a green flag unit. When they were writing within their communities and out of the overtly public gaze, there was less need to cloak themselves in the mantle of the "Fighting Irish". However, the working-class Irish American tendency to present their experiences of combat in an unvarnished, unsentimental fashion can conceal the fact that they carried with them into action a set of societal and personal expectations that centred around the moral courage of themselves, their comrades and their officers.[34] As a result, any individual who did not meet these expectations, or failed a test that the majority of their comrades passed, exposed themselves to censure. These attitudes conformed in almost every respect to the norms prevalent within wider American service.[35] While Irish American troops are often regarded as having had less exposure to the public shaming within home communities that others faced, this does not appear to have been the case when it came to combat.[36] On the contrary, they proved just as ready to name and shame those who exhibited these perceived deficiencies as were their non-ethnic comrades, indicating that they—and many in their communities—expected men to perform bravely and honourably under fire.

Doubts about a comrade's moral strength were not just confined to performance on the field of battle. Writing to his family in Philadelphia in early 1862, William McIntyre

[33] See Carmichael, *Common Soldier*, 121, 129-130.

[34] For a detailed and wide-ranging discussion on concepts of courage during the Civil War, see Linderman, *Embattled Courage*, 7-110.

[35] On the parallels with non-ethnic service, see McPherson, *Cause and Comrades*, 80. For a discussion on attitudes towards cowardice during the war, see Chris Walsh, ""Cowardice Weakness or Infirmity, Whichever It May Be Termed": A Shadow History of the Civil War", *Civil War History* 59:4 (2013). 492-526.

[36] This is largely due to a perceived lesser ideological commitment among Irish American communities to the war effort. The powerful influence the perceptions and expectations of those at home could have on the conduct of Civil War soldiers has been noted by a number of scholars, see e.g. Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 13, 24-25.

of the 95th Pennsylvania Infantry shared his views on another Irish American comrade: "James Carroll was left at the Hospital…I dont know what is the matter with him unless it is weakness I think it is for he don't look sick."[37] Those serving in non-ethnic units were more than willing to cast aspersions on the character of their countrymen if they didn't meet the mark. Cavan native James Fitzpatrick was serving with the 96th New York Infantry at Bermuda Hundred in 1864 when he heard that fellow Irish emigrant John Maguire—serving in a different regiment on a different front—had shot himself in the hand to avoid battle. "I understand that John Maguire Maimed him Selfe in place of the Rebles he was not in the fight at Cold Harbour" he reported to his mother and sister, "and all the 98 [98th New York] knows it".[38] After the Battle of Malvern Hill, Patrick Dooley of the 40th New York Infantry struggled with reports that emerged about his friend Mike Sexton. He had been within three yards of him when Confederate artillery began to take a toll on the unit, but Mike had soon disappeared. Dooley concluded that the bombardment must have "made poor Mike a little discouraged and induce him to crawll away to a more comfortable quarter". It was three days before he was next heard from, when he reported wounded. Despite their friendship, Patrick clearly harboured suspicions, and was willing to share them with the community at home. "all the men in the Company, and especially the Captain think that he Shot himself in the hand in order to get home" he explained, though he remained reluctant to believe that his friend "would act So barbarous towards himself".[39]

The instances related above took place in non-ethnic regiments, but in each case involved one Irish American commenting on the actions of another. All of the soldiers

[37] William McIntyre to "Dear Father & Mother" 20 April 1862, WC45770.
[38] James Fitzpatrick to "Dear Mother & Sister" 10 September 1864, WC75056; CWMRA of James Fitzpatrick, 96th New York Infantry, NYSA. Maguire's Irish nativity and his wounding in the hand on 2 June 1864 are confirmed by his muster roll abstract. See CWMRA of John Maguire, 98th New York Infantry, NYSA.
[39] Patrick Dooley to "Dear Mother" 15 July 1862, WC6206.

they were referring to were members of their home communities, which were intrinsically Irish American in their makeup. By drawing attention to these perceived failings, these men were articulating their belief that their comrades had failed not only a test of manhood, but had failed in their duty to the community from which they were drawn. At the core of that expected duty was performance in combat.

Irish American writings on facing the enemy comprehensively demonstrate that Lonn's view of the Irish as being possessed of an "ardour for war" and Wiley's determination that they had "a sheer love of combat" are far wide of the mark.[40] There was no material difference between how Irish Americans reacted to battle in comparison to any other group. They shared the same fears and failings, the same capacity for courage. The majority also shared the same expectations that the man standing beside them would do their duty by their uniform, their regiment, their company and their community—expectations that the dictates of nineteenth century manhood demanded of almost everyone in northern service, regardless of ethnicity. It was this that influenced their performance under fire, not some in-built predilection for violent confrontation.[41] As with their non-ethnic comrades, those who wrote of a burning desire for battle generally found such sentiments did not survive first contact with armed Confederates.

A continuation of these trends can be seen in the development of esprit-de-corps during the war and how Irish American men referenced battlefield performance. The evolution of esprit-de-corps was a particularly important factor for Irish Americans in

[40] Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, 47; Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank*, 138-139.

[41] The tendency of working-class men to view war and combat as a "job that had to be done" in contrast to the upper classes' more idealised perspective was noted among German troops in the First World War, though Earl Hess has argued that America's essentially preindustrial society make direct analogy on this point with the Civil War problematic. See Hess, *Union Soldier in Battle*, 134-135. Long after any initial ardour for combat had been extinguished, this sense of duty prevailed, and helped men to return to face further trials under fire. See James M. McPherson, *This Mighty Scourge: Perspectives on the Civil War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 160.

mixed units, as it could serve to ease ethnic, religious and political differences.[42] In their writings, they consistently preferenced describing the exploits of their company, regiment or brigade over personal or individual courage. James Hayes from Co. Cork offered a relatively rare exception in late 1862 when he proclaimed to his brother from Middle Tennessee: "I embrace danger".[43] Significantly, James was writing to a male relative, whereas many of his comrades were penning letters to female family members. More typical was Limerick immigrant Michael Daly, who put down a Confederate retreat from his regiment's front in Tennessee to the fact that "they heard that they were in action with the 7th Illinois Cavlry".[44] After overcoming some Confederates in Northern Virginia during the early months of the war, Michael Foran of the 5th Pennsylvania Reserves reported to his cousin: "thay giv us a new name this morning Those rebels Was cald the Tigers and our Curnell Cold us the lines of Pinnsyliania and a Terer To the Vergnins Tigers".[45] As with most Civil War soldiers, Irish American's pride in their unit—ethnic or not—tended to strengthen as the regimental esprit-de-corps grew and the men endured hardships and battle together. Illiterate Irish-born labourer Joseph McConaghy of the mixed 73rd Pennsylvania Infantry spoke for many when he wrote in late 1863 that "i had rather be with my regtment than to be a way from it i did not like to leave the boys for i have ben with them too yers and half".[46]

As the war progressed many old soldiers like Joseph McConaghy who had shown a consistent commitment to the war effort had to contend with an influx of new men who

[42] For a study on how esprit-de-corps developed within a regiment, see Mark H. Dunkelman, *Brothers One and All: Esprit De Corps in a Civil War Regiment* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana state University Press, 2004). In his analysis of southern men in Confederate service, James Broomall identified the creation of what he termed "emotional communities" of men who saw service, which endured beyond the conflict. See James J. Broomall, *Private Confederacies: The Emotional Worlds of Southern Men as Citizens and Soldiers* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 2.

[43] James Hayes to "my Dear brother" 9 December 1862, WC37552.

[44] Michael Daly to "My Dear Mother" 14 March 1863, WC143339.

[45] Michael Foran to "Dear Cusen" 29 October 1861, WC126742.

[46] Joseph McConaghy to "Dear mother" 4 October 1863, WC84155.

had not been there in 1861 and 1862. As was the case for many veterans, they often looked upon those who had sat out the conflict's early years with a sense of scorn.[47] As the draft loomed, some commented on their delight at the prospect that these men would now have to fight. Following the passage of the Militia Act in the summer of 1862, regular James McHugh from Co. Tyrone sarcastically asked his mother to "give my respects to the drafted men and tell them i wished they would all have to go girls and all".[48] Mathew McCourt was in similarly caustic mood when he told his mother and sister "i guess i we will Soon see a good many more of the nice young men of Ann Arbor out here when they commence drafting but when they get here they wont think there is much fun in Souldering".[49] Some commentary, such as that from McCourt, suggests that they held particular resentment towards those from more well-to-do backgrounds who had heretofore avoided service. By the time the Enrollment Act was in full swing in late 1863, Timothy Toomey expressed his disgust at the antics of those seeking to avoid enlistment. He was glad he was in the army rather than "to be waiting the draft at home and getting up some dam lie about myself in order to get exempt why it seems that there is not a dozen sound men in Bloomfield every man that was drafted had something the matter of him".[50]

Some veterans' views on those sitting out the war were borne from contempt for a perceived lack of courage and patriotism. But for many of these working-class men there was also a heavy dose of emotional and economic resentment that these new recruits had avoided so much of the fighting, and were now able to join on better conditions. Garrett Barry was already lamenting the improving terms of later enlistees

[47] On negative views of veterans towards late war enlistees see e.g. McPherson, *Cause and Comrades*, 116.
[48] James McHugh to "Dear mother" 23 July 1862, WC80051.
[49] Mathew McCourt to "Dear Mother and Sister" 7 August 1862, WC85252.
[50] Timothy Toomey to "Dear Mother" 9 December 1863, WC46367.

by April 1863. Writing to family having met an acquaintance from home in a nine-month unit, he grumbled:

> I for one if I new as mutch as I do now I should not have come when I did I should wait until this big Bounty would be given & thin come it would pay to get kiled then & not have to stay but nine mounths at that[51]

John Madden was of similar mind. By August 1863, wearied by the "awful carnage" and "fruitlessness of war", he gave voice to his feelings about the new draftees: "Wait Till some of them are in it going in 3 years since the bloody rebellion broke out and I left my fire to fight for the Country. Send them down into this hot climate and some of them will curse the hour they were born."[52] Some hoped that the draft would snare specific individuals from their community who they particularly disliked. William Carroll of the 7th Connecticut Infantry wrote to his mother: "i suppose the have a great time drafting up in Connecticut let me Know if the have Stephen Hall yet i hope the will".[53]

Irish Americans had the most to say about drafted men around the times when the draft lotteries were taking place. Outside of those periods, they expressed relatively little opinion on the matter. They had almost nothing to say about the still greater numbers who were coming to the war as substitutes and bounty volunteers, despite the large Irish contingent amongst them. This can be partly explained by the fact that these new men were overwhelmingly drawn from the same class and financial background as they were. Much as these veterans may have resented the financial inducements that brought the fresh recruits into service, the majority of Irish American servicemen did not have an expectation that every man of military-age from their communities should be in uniform. They realised and accepted that this was an impractical commitment for men

[51] Garrett Barry to "Dear farther" 8 April 1863, WC97336.
[52] John Madden to "Dear Mother" 2 August 1863, WC86549.
[53] William Carroll to "Dear mother" 4 September 1862, WC92361.

of their societal position, and in any event, most of them felt that their communities had already sent their fair share to the front.

Far and away the overriding sentiment prevalent among Irish Americans was not anger at who was not in the service, or when they had joined, but their hopes for who they wanted to avoid uniform. Again and again, soldiers and sailors expressed a desire that their friends and family members avoid the dangers of a military life. This is another trait that the Irish shared with Civil War soldiers from across the North, though Irish Americans seem to have articulated it to an extremely high degree.[54] Many vocalised such hopes in almost the same breadth as condemning others who stayed at home. Just a few weeks before articulating his disgust at the antics of Bloomfield men seeking to avoid the draft, Timothy Toomey voiced his regret that his friend Daniel Sheehan's name had been drawn.[55] When it came to a desire for those closest to them to avoid the military life, there was little distinction between early or late war recruits. As men who were used to living an often-precarious financial existence, they were all too familiar with the economic motivators which attracted substitutes to the military. This acknowledgement seems to have served to temper many Irish American veterans' reactions towards these financial recruits—as long as they did their duty.

As highlighted in Chapter Two, while the majority of Irish Americans enlisted in the first two years of the conflict, significant numbers entered the fray afterwards, experiencing the conflict from the perspective of the much-maligned late war recruit—many of them substitutes or bounty volunteers. This complex, important and neglected group were vital to securing Union victory, particularly as the majority of early war

[54] As Reid Mitchell has noted, most soldiers were eager to see shirkers drafted, but hoped that their own family members would escape. See Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers:Their Expectations and Experiences* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 84-85.
[55] Timothy Toomey to "Dear Mother" 17 August 1863, WC46367.

volunteers chose not to re-enlist at the close of their terms of service.[56] Certainly, not all substitutes and late war bounty enlistees were created equal, and there was undeniably extreme variability as to their quality.[57] Bounty jumpers in particular had a dramatic contemporary impact on perceptions of late war recruits, who often came to be seen as the antithesis of the volunteer ideals of 1861 and 1862. This led to the adoption of a more draconian approach in how these men were treated. That was something experienced by Co. Laois substitute Edward Fitzpatrick, who found himself virtually imprisoned in a Trenton camp in order to prevent his abscondment before he was assigned to his unit in November 1864:

> this is not Just the place that you mite think it was we cant git out…wear pend rit up her lik Beef cretrs we cant luck over the fence it self and if i had to go a gane i wold not go as a sub for we Dont git the choise of regment thay send us war thay se fit to put us thare is all sorts hear thare is sum swaren and sum praing and sum dancn and sum singen[58]

Within the ranks, the degree of opprobrium substitutes and bounty men received from early war enlistees often depended on when the new men entered their units and what they subsequently endured together. In the Eastern Theater, where most Irish Americans served, many of those who joined the army prior to the 1864 campaigning

[56] There is much disagreement as to how many eligible Union soldiers chose to re-enlist. Earl Hess estimates that 100,000 veterans chose not to do so in 1864, with around 136,000 deciding to sign on again and see the war through, see Hess, *Union Soldier*, 89. Joseph Glatthaar estimates that only 6.5 percent of all Union soldiers re-upped, but places the re-enlistment rate in Sherman's army at 48.53 percent, see Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea*, 187. In contrast, Jonathan White estimated re-enlistment in the Army of the Potomac at just 14.8 percent, though this is disputed by Zachery Fry, whose analysis suggests 33.1 percent of that army signed on for the duration. See Jonathan W. White, *Emancipation, the Union Army, and the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014), 167-169; Zachery A. Fry, *A Republic in the Ranks: Loyalty and Dissent in the Army of the Potomac* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 197-199. 75 percent of a unit had to re-enlist for it to become a Veteran Volunteer regiment.

[57] See Michael Thomas Smith, *The Enemy Within: Fears of Corruption in the Civil War North* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 127-153.

[58] Edward Fitzpatrick to "Dr Wife" 17 November 1864, WC142303. The measures put in place to keep new recruits in the army grew increasingly severe as 1864 progressed. By September that year, Ulysses S. Grant was complaining about the extreme level of desertion among new men, claiming that only one effective soldier was being gained for every five reported as enlisted in the North. See Smith, "The Most Desperate Scoundrels Unhung", 159.

season integrated well, developed their own sense of esprit-de-corps, and came to be generally accepted by the bulk of their regiments. One of them was Irish immigrant John Hall, who joined the Irish Brigade in January 1864. When he reflected in 1865 on the hardships he had experienced over the previous year, he did so with the sorrow and pride of a veteran, lamenting "theres only 8 of us that left Hart Island n.y here at present out of our fine Company".[59] There was a marked distinction in perception between those—like Hall—who had endured the brutal summer of 1864 and those who had not. This was evident in the aftermath of a mass capture of 165 men of the famed 69th New York Infantry while on picket on 30 October 1864. The fallout from this incident was immediate and severe, and an investigation was launched into the events surrounding it. In seeking to explain the catastrophe, the 69th's Lieutenant Robert Milliken reported that 190 of his soldiers that night were "new men", and only 40 were "old soldiers". Detailed analysis was able to establish the service details of 120 of the men captured, and confirmed what Milliken meant; he regarded someone as a "new man" if he had arrived in the late summer or autumn of 1864, while anyone who had experienced the Overland Campaign—substitute or not—was regarded by him to be an "old soldier".[60]

Regardless of whether he was a volunteer or a substitute, any man who joined the military after the first year of war did so in the full knowledge of what he might face. As the war progressed, many throughout the service saw the army as little more than a death sentence. If you had to serve, most agreed, there was only branch to consider. Cavan immigrant James Fitzpatrick of the 96th New York Infantry articulated this when

[59] John Hall to "Friend Patrick" 30 April 1865, WC77334.

[60] For the detailed analysis of this incident, see Damian Shiels, ""Our Pickets Were Gobbled": Assessing the Mass Capture of the 69th New York, Petersburg, 1864", *Irish in the American Civil War*, (2015), https://irishamericancivilwar.com/2015/12/10/our-pickets-were-gobbled-assessing-the-mass-capture-of-the-69th-new-york-petersburg-1864/, accessed 4 May 2019. Of the 120 identifiable men captured, only 26 had been in the unit prior to the Overland. The bulk had arrived from August on, with 50 percent in September alone.

he heard one of his family had joined up. “I fill Sorry to think that he w going into the Cavelry I Rather he would go in to the Navy but I am glad he did not go into the Infantry”.[61] The navy was considered the safer option, something that Irish American bluejackets freely admitted.[62] There is little doubt that this influenced many when they were deciding where to serve. Watching soldiers being transferred to the navy in early 1864, sailor Daniel O’Neil remarked how “the Poor Fellows are glad to get rid of the Army”.[63] Dublin sailor Thomas Hynes encountered one of these transferred men and found that he had previously known him in the East India Company. In conversation, he learned that the new tar had endured “one Brother shot down by his side”, had been wounded himself, and had just received news another brother had been killed. Hynes told his wife: “we often tallk of what difference there is between the Army & the Navy and of how small a chance I should have stood of ever returning alive if I had have been foolish enough to gone there…my old acquantance thanks his stars that he is out of it all right”.[64]

3.2 Faith

Whether a soldier or sailor, the majority of Irish Americans shared similar experiences to their non-ethnic comrades when adjusting to life in camp and coming to terms with the shock of action. But one area that did set them apart was their religion. The Catholic faith was far and away the predominant creed among Irish Americans in the Union military. While much work has been done on how men of others denominations

[61] James Fitzpatrick to “Dear Mother & Sister” 10 September 1864, WC75056.
[62] In his analysis of motivations for enlistment in the navy, Michael J. Bennett found that the two that recurred most frequently were making money and “getting clean”. He describes “getting clean” as meaning “joining the war but avoiding the hardship and risk associated with being a soldier.” See Bennett, *Union Jacks*, 13.
[63] Daniel O’Neil to “Dear Parents” 30 April 1864, Navy WC1994.
[64] Thomas Hynes to “My Dear Wife” 28 August 1864, Navy WC4104.

interacted with their religion, prior to the gathering of this corpus, the lack of letters from ordinary Irish soldiers has proved a major impediment for those seeking to understand the lives of non-elite Catholics.[65] Despite their numbers, throughout the conflict these men had to contend with a profound lack of access to their clergy. Only fifty-three Catholic chaplains are known to have served between 1861 and 1865, a modest presence that was supplemented by the hundreds of nuns who volunteered in wartime hospitals.[66] Soldiers and sailors outside ethnic regiments had particularly scant interaction with Catholic clerics. Their correspondence demonstrates that in their absence, they had to develop alternative ways to interact with their faith.

The dominance of Catholicism has often led to the disappearance from the narrative of the many thousands of Presbyterian and Anglican Irish Americans in United States uniform. Yet they were there, often fighting shoulder to shoulder with their Catholic counterparts in ethnic Irish formations. Perhaps the best known example is William McCarter of the Irish Brigade, a Protestant who after the conflict recorded his experiences with the 116th Pennsylvania Infantry.[67] As McCarter's reminiscences indicate, there seems to have been remarkably little in the way of sectarian tension

[65] Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union*, 5-6. Kurtz's work is by far the most significant contribution to the understanding of the Catholic experience of the American Civil War. For an overview of the importance of religion and religious belief in the conflict, see Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout and Charles Reagan Wilson (eds), *Religion and the American Civil War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Steven E. Woodworth, *While God is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2001).

[66] Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union*, 4. For biographies of some of these religious men and women, see David Power Conyngham, *Soldiers of the Cross, The Authoritative Text: The Heroism of Catholic Chaplains and Sisters in the American Civil War*, edited by David J. Endres and William B. Kurtz (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019). As Randall M. Miller points out, one of the reasons there were so few Catholic chaplains was the refusal of Protestant officers to accept priests into the role. See Randall M. Miller "Catholic Religion, Irish Ethnicity, and the Civil War" in Miller et. al., *Religion and the American Civil War*, 265.

[67] McCarter, *My Life in the Irish Brigade.*

between Anglican, Presbyterian and Catholic Irishmen in these units.[68] Instead the bonds of shared military participation appear to have united them. A case in point is that of Co. Armagh Presbyterian Lieutenant Robert Boyle of Corcoran's Irish Legion, mortally wounded at Cold Harbor. When he was shot down, he fell beside Co. Tipperary Catholic James Hickey. In what proved to be his final letter to his wife from Libby Prison, Boyle took care to reveal Hickey's fate, stating he "died beside me on the field". His widow Agnes subsequently donated this precious piece of correspondence to Hickey's widow Alice in order that she might receive a pension.[69] This absence of sectarian rancour among the military Irish also appears to have been broadly true outside the ethnic units, though there were contrary voices. One was offered by John Corcoran of the 2nd Massachusetts Infantry, who in 1862 accused "orange men" of being the "mean Irishmen" then seeking draft exemptions as foreign nationals in St. Louis. Corcoran felt sure that "a true Son of Earin" would attempt no such thing.[70]

Regardless of whether they were Catholic, Anglican or Presbyterian, many Irish Americans were believers in the role of God's providence, and of God's potential to directly influence their lives. This was something they held in common with the majority of Civil War soldiers and sailors. William Finn certainly thought God was with him when his vessel the USS *Shawsheen* was captured and destroyed shortly after he left her, an incident which led him to "feel that gods Providence is on my side".[71] As the

[68] For a discussion of McCarter in this respect, see Kevin O'Neill, "The Star-Spangled Shamrock: Meaning and Memory in Irish America" in Ian McBride (ed) *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 128-129.

[69] Robert Boyle to "my dear wife" 4 June 1864, WC82386; WC49639.

[70] John Corcoran to "Dear parents" 1 August 1862, WC10461. Though evidence for sectarian divisions among Irish Americans in uniform is sparse, it certainly existed in civilian life. Its most famous manifestation came in the so-called "Orange Riots" that broke out in New York City in 1870 and 1871. See Michael A. Gordon, *The Orange Riots: Irish Political Violence in New York City, 1870 and 1871* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993).

[71] William Finn to "My Dear Mother and Sister" 12 May 1864, Navy Survivor Pension Certificate No. 5517, NARA. For discussion of the role that a belief in God's providence played in the war, see e.g. Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*.

war dragged on, the seemingly random hand fate took in determining who lived and died forced veterans to adapt their notions of providence, and it became something they hoped could play a role even in the moment of death. Some of them joined their non-ethnic comrades in embracing what Peter Carmichael has termed "providential pragmatism", which allowed them to adapt to circumstance and maintain their belief in God in the face of such tumult.[72] When Irish immigrant and veteran volunteer Smith Davis was killed in action at Spotsylvania, his fellow Irish American veteran James Grogan wrote of his hope that "Providence in its mercy put some thought of the terrible danger his soul was in and as there is no limit to Gods mercy, let us hope his soul is at rest."[73] The pair also appear to offer another example of shared-background outweighing religious difference; Smith Davis was a Presbyterian, while it is likely that James Grogan was a Catholic.

The mortal danger and strain of combat that these men consistently faced caused many to look to God in hopes of survival. Denis Larkin from Co. Galway, a late war enlistee, invoked God again and again in the many letters he wrote home through 1864 and 1865. His hope that God would "protect" and "spare" him became a mantra that sometimes bordered on a desperate plea. For him and many like him, his religion and faith were fundamental in enabling him to endure. Typical were the sentiments he expressed when rumours circulated that his 6th New York Heavy Artillery were bound for the hard fighting around Petersburg:

> some sayes that we are gone to PeatersBurg…i hoPe that we wont go to PeatersBurg i hoPe that we wont go thare fore that Place is a Bad if the regment go thare thay wont maney come out of thare But you must not feeal Bad aBout it if we go thare for I hoP that the great god will Bring me safe out of it and every other Poor man[74]

[72] On providence and the concept of "providential pragmatism", see Carmichael, *Common Soldier*, 67.
[73] James Grogan to "Mrs MJ Davis" 11 June 1864, WC76523.
[74] Denis Larkin [no salutation, but to parents] 27 December 1864, WC120669.

Denis Larkin repeatedly hoped that God would enable him to see home again. For him as for a lot of other working-class Irish Americans, religion was completely intertwined with thoughts and manifestations of community and home—yet another similarity they shared with their non-ethnic comrades.[75] Traditionally, Sundays had represented the day when working-class men had the opportunity to spend the most time with friends and family. When Thomas Keating of the 9th New York State Militia heard church bells while on guard duty in Maryland, it immediately conjured images of home: "i Stood and Listen and it Made me Cry it Put me in mined of father moony bells [Father Mooney presided over his home parish in New York]".[76] Writing in 1862, Thomas Diver of the Irish 69th Pennsylvania told his mother "this is Sunday and it is the day that I think the most of home I was at Mass this morning".[77] A rare chance to attend a church caused the thoughts of Thomas Doyle of the 4th Maine Infantry to turn to his wife: "I was glad to think bouth you and me herd the word of god to geather on the same Sunday all though far a part".[78]

Not all Irish American soldiers had such connections to the Church, or felt the need to practice their faith at the front. Asked if there was access to Catholic clergy in the 1st New York Cavalry, John Kelly replied "there <u>is</u> But Prayers are all forgotten Cheif Devotion is Cleaning the horse + Sadle".[79] Nicholas Mahar noted how fleeting devotion could be among the men as he recalled a Sunday when "a man sing and praid for us Solgers but i gest tha forgot it befor tha got to camp".[80] Captain John Lynch of the Irish Brigade, in recounting how the men under his charge spent their leisure time, remarked that they "sit by the Camp fire & talk or go to their tents and say their Prayers (card

[75] See Carmichael, *Common Soldier*, 92.
[76] Thomas Keating to "My Dear Mother" 10 December 1861, WC88338.
[77] Thomas Diver to "Dear Mother" 2 February 1862, WC38010.
[78] Thomas Doyle to "My Dear Margaret" 8 October 1861, WC27522.
[79] John Kelly to "Dear Mother" 22 November 1861, WC26080.
[80] Nicholas Mahar to "Dear sister" 13 June 1864, WC107142.

playing)".[81] But even for those with little faith, access to a Catholic chaplain brought its benefits, as the interconnectivity between religion and community meant that aside from spiritual succour priests were regularly called upon to act as a link with home.

The most common manifestation of this association between chaplain and community involved the remittance of money. This was a benefit particularly enjoyed by men in ethnic units. "I will this day through the hands of the priest send you 50 Dollars", Michael Connerty of the Irish Brigade informed his mother in early 1862.[82] Even where Catholic soldiers had restricted access to the clergy, they often sought them out to perform this role. To this end Canadian-born Irish American Patrick Collins of the 6th Maine Infantry turned to Father Francis McAtee of the 31st New York Infantry, who served in the same division. He informed his family that the priest was "a Splended man i will send my money home by exepress…he will express it for me".[83] While the preference in such matters was to utilise chaplains of their own denomination, if unavailable Irish Americans were willing to turn to those of other faiths. When Catholic John Sheehan of the 94th New York Infantry failed to get to the express office himself, he asked his regiment's Presbyterian chaplain to go for him, as he "has always done it for the men and it always went safe".[84]

Regardless of the ancillary functions performed by Catholic chaplains, their primary purpose was to provide spiritual support and access to the sacraments. But the vast majority of Irish American Catholics did not encounter them with anything approaching regularity during the war. Instead these men had to take any opportunities that arose to

[81] John C. Lynch to "My dear darling Mother" 17 December 1861, WC94532.
[82] Michael Connerty to "Dear Mother" 17 January 1862, WC8938.
[83] Patrick Collins to "Dear Sister" 6 April 1863, WC94716.
[84] John Sheehan to "Dear Father" 12 September 1863, WC93487. The 94th New York's chaplain was Reverend Philos G. Cook, see Benedict R. Maryniak and John Wesley Brinsfield Jr., *The Spirit Divided: Memoirs of Civil War Chaplains: The Union* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2007), 251.

attend mass, and more importantly for men facing their mortality, to receive confession and absolution. Most commonly, this came when a priest passed through their brigade, division or corps, or for sailors when they were in port. Outside of such occasions, many looked to the religious of other denominations for spiritual succour. Joseph Hopkins Twichell, the Congregationalist chaplain of the 71st New York Infantry, found that while some of the many Irish under his charge sought out mass or avoided his services altogether, up to two-thirds of his attendees could be Irish Catholics.[85] Those reluctant to take such steps had to look to themselves and their families for their spiritual welfare. One of the methods they employed to this end was to have masses offered in their name. Before leaving for the front, Cavan native Thomas Doyle and his friend went to confession, received the holy sacrament, and "left 5 dollars apiece for Masses while we are away."[86] In 1863, Thomas Monaghan of the 95th Pennsylvania Infantry wrote to thank his mother for "the Mass you have got Said for me."[87] In the absence of direct contact with ministers of the Church, these actions helped to provide some spiritual comfort, particularly in the eyes of concerned relatives at home. But in order to feel a direct link with God at the front, Irish Americans turned instead to physical objects of their religion—objects that they could carry about their person.

For Irish American Catholics in the Union military, the most common expression of their faith came in the form of physical sacramentals. The regular use of such objects was a major plank of the "devotional revolution" that the Catholic Church had been engaged in, and Irish American servicemen eagerly and wholeheartedly embraced it. The comfort they provided allowed many to cope in the absence of the spiritual support

[85] Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 125, 136.
[86] Thomas Doyle to "Dear Mother" 7 August [1862], WC133177.
[87] Thomas Monaghan to "Dear Mother" 14 August 1863, WC52908.

that most of their comrades enjoyed.[88] Overwhelmingly, the devotional objects of choice were those that could be worn about the neck, especially scapulars and Agnus Dei.[89] Together with items such as religious medals, rosary beads, small crosses and prayerbooks, these made up the religious toolkit of the Catholic Irish in the field. This was poignantly demonstrated with the 1988 discovery of the partial remains of Irish Brigade soldiers buried on the field at Antietam, where among the artefacts recovered was a miraculous medal, a crucifix and rosary beads.[90] Such items were important for the devout, but they also took on the function of protective talismans for thousands of men of more moderate faith. One was sailor John Sullivan, who in 1863 described for his mother the measures he took to strengthen his resolve: "i have this agnus Die Next to my Hearth Mother and a pitchures of you and my Dear litel Brothers Witch Will give Me Courage through Every battll".[91] John Dougherty of the Irish Brigade confided that the "small articles" he wore "gave me a feeling of safty in the time of danger when the shells was busting over us and the bullets flying thick around I felt perfectly safe."[92]

Active servicemen obtained devotional objects through a variety of means, and arduous conditions necessitated their constant replacement. Catholic chaplains sought to distribute them to the faithful whenever they had an opportunity to do so. John O'Connell of the 2nd Massachusetts related that when "a priest came among the catholics of this regiment he…gave most of us Medals and Agnus Deis".[93] The scapular William Dwyer of the Irish Brigade had been given by his chaplain, Father James

[88] This was recognised by some senior Catholic Union officers, who occasionally requested objects such as scapulars and rosaries for the men. See Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union*, 71.
[89] See Larkin, "Devotional Revolution", 644-645.
[90] See Stephen R. Potter and Douglas W. Owsley, "An Irishman Dies at Antietam: An Archaeology of the Individual" in Clarence R. Geier and Stephen R. Potter (eds) *Archaeological Perspectives on the American Civil War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 56-72.
[91] John Sullivan to "Dear Mother" 18 June 1863, Navy WC2254.
[92] John Dougherty to "Dear Mother" 4 September 1862, WC93207.
[93] John O'Connell to "My Dear Mother" 5 February 1862, WC27032.

Dillon, had seen him safely through the bloodbaths of Antietam and Fredericksburg, but by January 1863 he was in need of a replacement, as it was "all wore and I lost the part that goes down my back".[94] Most obtained these items from home. Telling his mother he had not forgotten his "duty to God and the Blessed Virgin", Marine Peter Campbell requested she send "a scapular to wear…get it Blessed before you send the scapular".[95] James Healy of the 9th Massachusetts Infantry was pleased to receive a religious habit from his parents in August 1862, remarking that "it resembles the one Father Skully [the regimental chaplain] gave me".[96] Some men sought to augment their sacramentals, and it is probable they occasionally even did so with holy material from Ireland. In 1861 Patrick Dooley wrote of the "Blessed Clay" he had recently received. "I will Sew it to night to my Agnesdei", he determined, hoping that the addition would add to the power of his sacramental. It is possible that the clay he procured had originated from a holy site near his native Clonmel in Co. Tipperary.[97]


MRS. SAYERS
HAS FOR SALE CATHOLIC
Books, Crucifixes, Rosaries, Holy Water
Fonts, Biscuit Figures and Scapulars, stamped and
worked in the neatest style. Habits made to order.
No. 50 Prince st., two doors from Mulberry. 235

An advertisement from the New York Irish American of 6 September 1862 offering the sale of religious items. These were commonly purchased at home at the request of servicemen for their use at the front.

[94] William Dwyer to "My Dear Mother" 26 January 1863, WC103233.
[95] Peter Campbell to "Dear Mother" 5 September 1862, Navy WC2023.
[96] James Healy to "My Dear Parents" 10 August 1862, WC65439.
[97] Patrick Dooley to "Dear Mother" 20 September 1861, WC6206.

While most Irish Americans were stoic about their lack of access to Catholic ministration, the occasion when it could and did bring distress for them and their families came when they were approaching death. There can be little doubt that a fear of dying without the performance of last rites contributed towards unit selection for some of the more devout.[98] In the main, hospital staff and chaplains of other faiths made every effort to provide spiritual comfort and where possible procure Catholic priests for dying Irish Americans, but often there was none to be had. In writing to the family of Dubliner Patrick Connely following his death in South Carolina, the Episcopal chaplain of the 6th Connecticut Infantry lamented that the soldier "could not have been buried by his own Priest. But there is none in all this Department. It is very wrong, I think, because I know it would be a great comfort to the boys to have some Father confessor where they could have his services."[99]

For many Catholics the absence of a priest denied them a "good death" in the eyes of their loved ones.[100] Aware of the impact this could have on those at home, mortally wounded men occasionally sought to provide them with advance consolation, while undoubtedly some comrades were willing to put words into their mouths to achieve the same end. When Irish immigrant Marine Mathew Droney of USS *Miami* was mortally wounded in August 1864, his Sergeant informed his widow that Mathew requested the following words be passed on to her: "I die in full faith of our Blessed and Holy Religion, and am confident that the blood of Jesus has washed away my sins and that

[98] The 9th Massachusetts Infantry specifically referenced their Catholic chaplain on one of their recruiting posters, noting that he would minister to the men's "spiritual wants and dispense the priceless blessings of religion." See Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union*, 54.

[99] C.T. Woodruff to "Mrs Conroy" 13 September 1862, WC26932. Emphasis in original. This passage also reveals that he had a number of Irish American Catholics under his charge.

[100] On concepts of a good death in the Civil War see Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008); Drew Gilpin Faust, "The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying", *The Journal of Southern History* 67:1 (2001), 3-38.

the blessed virgin is now interceding for me".[101] When seaman Thomas Hynes died while on service at Acapulco, Mexico, his wife asked if he had received Catholic rites. The response would have brought her little comfort. She was told that Thomas "had not the rights of the church but he had his senses to the last and Jesus the great high priest to hear".[102] In response to a like query, the widow of Kearn Phalen of the 11th Connecticut Infantry was informed by another Irish soldier: "About the Priest—he did not have one for I Can Assure you that they are not Very Plenty in the army I don't know that there is one in the 18th Corps + as for Being Prepared for death I Can not Say I hope that he was".[103]

3.3 Interactions with Home & Family

While their faith in God was important, for many Irish Americans the relationship of primary significance during their service was with the home front.[104] That was certainly the case for Irish immigrant Pat McConnell, who had left his widowed mother and four young siblings behind in Brooklyn to answer the call in November 1861. Within a few months, he had squirreled away $110 in the Williamsburgh Saving Bank, allowing him to boast of "what I have been doing since I have been sojering". He had big plans for his family's economic future. Top of his list was his determination "to have a head Stone on my Fathers Grave" even if he had to go "hungry and bare legget" in order to achieve it.[105] Then, just as Pat's war was set to begin in earnest, a letter arrived from home and

[101] William Stanly to "Respected Madam" 9 August 1864, Navy WC3230. Mathew Droney may well have spoken these lines. His very last words were supposedly "Comrades remember my wife and children", and his crewmates duly responded by gathering together a substantial sum for their future security.
[102] William K. Nowles to "Dear Madam" 6 January 1865, Navy WC4104.
[103] Michael O'Flaherty to "Mrs fitz Patrick" 25 September 1864, WC71372.
[104] As Peter Carmichael notes, during the Civil War "There was no boundary between the home front and the army". See Carmichael, *Common Soldier*, 12.
[105] Pat McConnell to "Dr. mother" 11 July 1862, WC109749.

the bottom fell out of his world. June 1862 was the month Pat's 4th New York Infantry finally moved into Virginia. But he would have remembered it as the month that he learned—out of the blue—that all his siblings had been placed in charitable care. While comrades were turning their minds towards facing the Confederates, he was frantically seeking to assist his family. His mother Ann, believing Pat to have "trouble enough", had not informed him of the extent of her financial travails, and the semi-literate woman had been slow to pass on the address of their new, smaller accommodations.[106] "I hope to God you will bring them back again as soon as you receive this letter", he pleaded, firing off $20 to help secure his siblings return. "my only request is that you get the childern back again and if you dont I donot want to hear from you again except it is impossible to do so". As a last resort, he offered to pay his siblings board as soon as he next mustered for pay, suggesting the Catholic Half Orphans Asylum for them, where "besides being brought up to there Religion they would get a good education". [107]

In that summer of 1862, it was not military manoeuvres that preoccupied Pat McConnell's mind, or army life that dictated his morale. It was the situation at home. Interactions with home—or a lack thereof—did as much to shape the Irish American experience of war as the trials at the front. For Pat McConnell and thousands of others, it was the most consequential relationship of their service. A preoccupation with the welfare and goings-on of those at home was something Irish Americans shared with the great majority of their comrades, North and South, and its importance has been

[106] Pat McConnell to "Dr. mother" 1 July 1862, WC109749. The 1855 New York Census records that Ann was able to read, but not write. See 1855 New York State Census, Kings, Brooklyn City, Ward 17, Ancestry.com.

[107] Pat McConnell to "Dr. mother" 1 July 1862, WC109749. The family fortunes appear to have worsened after Pat's mortal wounding at Antietam, as by 1866 they had moved from Williamsburgh to Corlear's Hook in Manhattan, an area described as being filled with "malarious slums", see *New York Times*, 1 July 1870. By the time his mother came to claim a pension, one of the children appears to have died.

demonstrated by numerous scholars.[108] Already unused to long separations from family and community, many Irishmen also had to reckon with the additional stress created by the financially precarious environment in which their families lived. Though such circumstances were far from unique to their ethnicity, the socio-economic position of the predominantly urban working-class Irish left them more vulnerable than a great number of their military peers. The Irish American reliance on often inconstant employment and rented accommodation created especially pronounced issues for those soldiers and sailors who harboured concerns for home. Such practical domestic issues far outstripped abstract ideological ones as the greatest challenge to their commitment to the Union, and uniformed Irish Americans spent infinitely more time fretting over the financial wellbeing of their families than they did contemplating the political futures of the United States, the Confederacy or Ireland.

With those at home particularly susceptible to the vagaries of the wartime economy, thousands of men were forced to try and steer a course which allowed their duty as a Federal soldier to co-exist with their duties and responsibilities to family. It is little surprise therefore that an enormous amount of their interactions with the home front revolved around living conditions and money. For men with families on the margins, a harsher than expected winter could warrant as much attention as the movements of the Rebel army. It was the increased costs that accompanied the colder months which were playing on James McGaffigan's mind when he wrote to his wife from the camp of the Irish Brigade in February 1862. He wanted to make sure that she and the children had enough money to combat the "cold and stormy" weather he had heard was lashing the

[108] See e.g. Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair*; Lesley J. Gordon, *A Broken Regiment: The 16th Connecticut's Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Lousiana State University Press, 2014). Home and family were also of central importance to Confederate soldiers, see e.g. Broomall, *Private Confederacies*, 44. As Aaron Sheehan-Dean has noted, nearly all men in uniform maintained a sense of being both soldiers and civilians through the conflict. See Sheehan-Dean "The Blue and the Gray in Black and White", 12.

northern states.[109] Similarly, Martin Flanagan, serving with his brother in the Excelsior Brigade, felt the need to explain why the money he had sent home in early 1862 had gone astray, a failure that had left his mother and sister "in neide of Coal and Clothes".[110]

Though military wages offered a guaranteed income in uncertain economic times, the failure of the Federal Government to meet the challenge of regularly paying hundreds of thousands of men proved enormously problematical for working-class Irish American troops. Gallons of ink were spilled as men sought to break the news to expectant family members that there was still no sign of the long-looked for paymaster. Union soldiers were supposed to be mustered for pay every two months, but there were frequent and often long delays. "the Cry is money money money", wrote Excelsior Brigade soldier Michael Carroll in January 1862, a sentiment many others frequently echoed.[111] Once these failings became common knowledge, it would have undoubtedly impacted working class enlistments. The erratic nature of the pay also contributed towards a broader acceptance that some men had to stay at home in order to broaden the economic base upon which family groups could draw.

The ramifications of erratic army pay had the potential to be disastrous for those on the home front, and Irish American servicemen did not have to look far for cautionary tales. John Hayes was serving in the 105th New York Infantry in 1862 when his wife Hanora died in Rochester shortly after giving birth to twin girls. At the time of the delivery she had been weakened by "utter want" owing to the fact that John "did not earn five dollors all winter he had got no pay yet for his soldiering". Hanora had been forced to move to cheaper accommodation just prior to the delivery, and had only

[109] James McGaffigan to "My dear Wife" 4 February 1862, WC2177.
[110] Martin Flanagan to "Dear Mother" 21 February 1862, WC61242.
[111] Michael Carroll to "Dear mother Brothers and Sisters" 22 January 1862, WC40248.

avoided the poorhouse due to the intercession of an aunt. At the front, the newly widowed John learned of his wife's fate at the same time as discovering that five of his children had been placed in institutions and orphan asylums.[112]

The inevitable consequence of such unforgivingly harsh realities was that unlike some of their comrades, Irish American troops were extremely reluctant to advocate patriotism as a balm for their family's wartime hardships. Patriotism lay at the core of being regarded a "good citizen" on the Northern home front, and patriotic women were expected to accept any hardship they faced.[113] But taking solace from high-minded ideals was the privilege of those in more secure economic circumstances; lofty sentiments of shared national suffering carried little water for those facing potential destitution. As a result—and in contrast to many of their middle and upper-class comrades—encouraging patriotic stoicism among their families was something the working-class Irish rarely did.[114]

Instead, they expended their energies in helping their families garner aid from Relief Committees, and in seeking out every possible means of providing for their dependents. When Terrence McFarland's mother lost her relief ticket, the Co. Down native had to try and work out a way of securing another one in the absence of his Colonel. He assured her he would "look after it and as soon as I get It I will send it to you".[115] The frequent difficulties families had in securing relief weighed heavily on men's minds. John Madden was angered when he learned that geography prevented his mother from accessing relief with the ticket he had sent. He was serving in a New York City

[112] Edmund Dwyer to "My Dear Father" 21 May 1862, WC132012. It is notable that despite these events, and concerted family efforts to discourage him from service, Edmund Dwyer ultimately enlisted regardless. NYMA of John Hayes, 105th New York Infantry, NYSA.
[113] See Gallman, *Defining Duty*, 210, 220.
[114] Scholars such as James McPherson have identified such sentiments as a feature of the letters of middle and upper-class soldiers. See McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 131-132, 135-136.
[115] Terrence McFarland to "Dear Mother" 4 December 1862, WC127929.

regiment, but his mother lived in Troy. “i think it is all a humbug for there is no one outside of the city of New York gets any money from the city of New york”, he seethed.[116] James McGee of the 69th New York Infantry was equally disgusted when he heard of his family’s failure to secure relief: “I hardly know what to think of the manner in which the Relief Commitee are humbugging the relations of Volunteers that are at home depending on them for support.”[117]

For their part, those at home were not shy in letting servicemen know of their struggles. In early 1864, Kearn Fitzpatrick of the 11th Connecticut Infantry received a letter from his wife Elizabeth that could not have failed to shake him. In a demonstration of how word spread fast among the Irish American community as well as everywhere else, Elizabeth had become aware that “the men all got paid down thear for all the women around hear got thear money” but she was yet to receive anything herself. Elizabeth was desperate; their son Willy was dying of the “lung fever”, and she had been forced to keep burning their limited fuel through the night. “I aint got as much wood as will do me a nother week” she told her husband. Angered at Kearn’s apparent neglect, she raged: “how do you suppose that I can get along or do you care for three little children and a woman left to the waves of the world”. To reinforce the seriousness of their plight and pile pressure on her husband to act, she added “what ill do I dont know if you dont send me some money very soon” and “write quick”.[118] Similar implications of failing in financial duty to family apparently lay behind correspondence James Corcoran received from his wife, which made the 5th New York Infantryman feel like “a Convicted fellon”.[119] John Kennedy of the 10th Ohio Infantry had to face the ignominy of the physical arrival of his mother in camp, where she proceeded to

[116] John Madden to “Dear Mother” 20 October 1863, WC86549.
[117] James McGee to “Dear Sisters” 27 December 1861, WC98814.
[118] Elizabeth Fitzpatrick to “Dear husband” 4 April 1864, WC71372.
[119] James Corcoran to “My Deir Wife” 24 January [1865], WC116032.

unsuccessfully plead with his Captain for his discharge, on the basis that he was her "sole support".[120]

A feeling of having left family in the lurch by enlisting and putting their lives at risk came close to overpowering some men, especially during low points in their service. Armagh's Patrick Carraher was utterly consumed by regret immediately prior to First Bull Run. He pleaded for his wife's forgiveness for enlisting, proclaiming it to be "the worst thing I ever done since I was born". Chastising himself for being a bad husband and father by risking death, he closed by stating: "I deserve all I am getting I might just as well shoot my self where you was and then I should die happy".[121] Similarly, the enlistment of an Irish American friend whom he had thought too "steady" to join up caused John Slattery of the 40th Massachusetts Infantry to reflect on the "wrong" he had done to his parents by going to war. He felt his actions deserved a fate worse than death in battle, vowing that "if heaven should spare my life to return home I shall devote the remainder of my life to their comfort hopping they have forgave me".[122]

Though self-doubt and fear undoubtedly played a role in forming such sentiments, these men held very genuine feelings of economic responsibility. These economic burdens were something that had to be borne by the young as well as the old, as the realities of life in Irish American communities forced financial responsibilities on teenagers and adults alike. While such strains were felt by men throughout the Union military, Irish Americans were particularly susceptible to them.[123] As explored in Chapter One, beyond pure economics, their societal position exposed their families to increased mortality rates which often impacted the major earner, while social issues

[120] Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 44; Affidavit of Stephen J. McGroarty 23 July 1866, WC117744.
[121] Patrick Carraher to "Dear Margaret" [no date but early July 1861], WC124533.
[122] John Slattery to "My Dear Sister" 20 October 1862, WC145128.
[123] As Reid Mitchell has pointed out, if a Civil War soldier's patriotism had to compete with issues at home, it could threaten his devotion to the military. See Mitchell, *Vacant Chair*, 29.

such as alcoholism and abandonment also contributed towards an increased financial pressure on younger men. In consequence, for the responsible majority, successfully fulfilling their duty to those at home constituted a core element of their sense of manhood. This sense of responsibility was demonstrated by Christopher McGiff of the 119th New York Infantry, who had assumed the position of a primary breadwinner due to his father's drinking. "you must not think i wount Send my money i will Send it while i have tow hands i will work fore you like a man" he vowed to his mother.[124]

One of the ways this feeling of economic responsibility manifested itself among Irish American servicemen was in consistent exhortations for friends and family to stay at home, and not to enlist. Such pronouncements were born from two concerns centred around the economic and physical wellbeing of their family and community. At a personal level, the men at the front were putting their lives on the line either in whole or in part to secure a steady income, and were loath to see others from their immediate family have to do the same. They also understood that the financial realities facing them meant that while some men served, others had to stay behind. This created a sense of ethnic and class solidarity that mitigated some of the alienation with those at home that manifested itself elsewhere in the military.[125] Daniel O'Neil, who had enlisted in the Marine Corps in the war's first summer, was one who recognised the disproportionate impact the conflict could have on working-class families. He wrote of his hope in early 1862 that "the War will be at an end before that time [the summer] as I believe the Poor folks of the Country are suffering from by it."[126] Timothy Toomey, a dutiful soldier,

[124] Christopher McGiff to "My Dear Mother" 25 April 1863, WC114360.
[125] Scholars of the northern soldier have identified the emergence of a growing distance between men at the front and those at home as the war progressed, as those in uniform felt increasingly neglected and began to view those outside the service with contempt. See e.g. Mitchell, *Vacant Chair,* 32-33; and especially Steven J. Ramold, *Across the Divide: Union Soldiers View the Northern Home Front* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2013).
[126] Daniel O'Neil to "Dear Father and Mother" 12 January 1862, Navy WC1994.

urged his mother in early 1863 to avoid seeking money from "those fellows that stay at home and advise poor men to go ought to See to their families".[127] Added to such sentiments was the fact that these soldiers and sailors were well aware of the scale of commitment their communities had already given to the war effort in terms of numbers in service. As with their non-ethnic comrades, they saw themselves as representatives of that community at the front, often felt pride in being such, and wanted their sacrifice to enable those they cared about most to stay beyond danger's reach.[128]

While the pressure of financial responsibilities towards those at home could depress morale, they also had the capacity to provide servicemen with a sense of self-worth, pride and achievement. Successfully performing the dual duties of fighting for the nation at the front and supporting dependents at home could be empowering. This pride in the sacrifice they were making also left little tolerance for any actors at home who were deemed to be unsupportive, ungrateful or exploitative. This was articulated by Richard Sheridan. When he left for the front he continued to pay all the bills, but he was quick to show his disdain when he felt he was being treated poorly by his father's creditors. "I suppose your landlord and grocer think I am very good as long as I send the Greenbacks" he vented, "if I was home to morrow I do not think I would remain a customer of either of them long".[129] In a further demonstration of the very real precarity many in the Irish American community faced, following Richard's death at Gettysburg, his father would ultimately be admitted to Blackwell's Island Alms House.

Despite the significant financial pressure placed on Irish American troops, many nonetheless retained a positive outlook about the potential long-term benefits of service

[127] Timothy Toomey to "My Dear Mother" 30 January 1863, WC46367.
[128] On men seeing themselves as representatives of their families while in service, see Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 17.
[129] Richard Sheridan to "Dear Father" 23 February 1863, WC117836.

for their families. Although the nature of written interactions tended to accentuate negative economic events, those who could weather the erratic nature of pay musters often managed to save substantial sums. These monies could then contribute towards an improvement in the living conditions of those at home, further boosting a soldier or sailor's sense of achievement. Despite fretting over the delays with his pay, Kerryman John Sullivan of the 99th New York Infantry adopted just such an outlook as he and his family worked towards increased financial security. Pleased that his mother had been offered a position that would allow her to "live rent free" (presumably as a domestic) he looked forward to putting his future pay towards buying furniture for them all so that they could "have a nice home when I return and commence a new life."[130] Thomas Hagan wanted to use his money to "try and by you [his mother] a plase to live instead of pain rent", while John Kennedy sought to placate his distraught parent by telling her "they would have a nice little farm" as a result of his service.[131] Having deposited another $100 for his father in the express office, John Sheehan, whose brother was in the naval service, told his father: "I think I have done as well for you the past year as I ever done". When he sent home more money a few months later he added "now this makes $225 I have sent you I think the place must be pretty near payed for it is time you was building A house".[132]

Maintaining their central role in the financial management of the home also allowed Irish American servicemen to preserve their relevance and importance, despite their remove. Fear of losing their status while they were away at war, or of being "forgotten" by friends and family weighed on the minds of Irish American servicemen, just as it did

[130] John Sullivan to "My Dear Mother" 8 December 1861, WC8731.
[131] Thomas Hagan to "Dear Mother + sisters" 27 September 1863, WC51663.
[132] John Sheehan to "Dear Father" 28 March 1863 and John Sheehan to "Dear Father" 12 September 1863, WC93487.

many of their non-ethnic comrades.[133] As was the case with so many Civil War soldiers and sailors, they moaned continuously about the perceived failure of their families to correspond with them as regularly as they should. Timothy Toomey's sentiments, written during a bout of homesickness while on campaign in Louisiana, were typical. "I have not received any letter from you since my last", he wrote his mother:

> …I would like to hear from home as often as the other boys there is nothing makes a fellow feel worse than to see all the other men get letters and none for him I have seen some fellows feel so bad that they would cry but I am not so chicken hearted as that I would not cry if I never had one but still I would like to hear from home often as well as the next one…[134]

The impatient appeals of American Civil War servicemen for letters from home, on some occasions articulated as heartfelt pleas, at others as angry demands, are ubiquitous.[135] Left with little to occupy their thoughts during long periods in camp, anxieties about home could fester—as could disagreements conducted at long distance. While in the midst of an argument with his wife in February 1862, Matthew Eagan petulantly advised her that she "need not think about me day nor night", suggesting she instead "begin to do for yourself the same as you were before you met with me and then by the time I am shot I will be out of your mind".[136] But these were words written in the heat of the moment—being forgotten was the very last thing he wanted. Soon afterwards he was signing off a letter with a poem which entreated her to "Remember Me":

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[133] Reid Mitchell argues that the men often felt neglected by those at home and could find "the spectacle of life going on without them…profoundly unsettling", something that could anger and depress them. See Mitchell, *Vacant Chair*, 33.

[134] Timothy Toomey to "Dear Mother", 13 October 1863, in WC46367.

[135] This is a feature of many conflicts. Studies of semi-literate correspondence from the First World War reveal a similarly insatiable desire for letters, and distress at delays in receiving it. See Martyn Lyons, ""Ordinary Writings" or How the "Illiterate" Speak to Historians" in Martn Lyons (ed) *Ordinary Writings, Personal Narratives: Writing Practices in 19th and Early 20th Century Europe*, (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 18-19; Martyn Lyons, *The Writing Culture of Ordinary People in Europe, c. 1860–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 35-37.

[136] Matthew Eagan [no salutation but to wife] 11 February 1862, WC25637.

Remember me! How sadly falls
That sound upon the ear
It fills the heart with memories s[weet]
And starts the bitter tear[137]

One strategy Irish American servicemen adopted in an effort to maintain their role within the home was by seeking to remotely direct family decisions and by dispensing advice and instructions. This was particularly the case for married men. Former labourer Timothy Harrington of the USS *Cumberland* was concerned that in his absence his wife would be dragged down by undesirables among their Irish American community. He issued instructions that there were a number of people she was to "have no truck with". This was a directive that particularly applied to the Sullivans, a family he regarded as having "lost there shame long agoe". To emphasise the consequences of defiance, he warned her that "if you do you are done with me".[138] Many men sought to provide more practical and less threatening guidance. In offering his mother and sister "a little simple advice", Kerry native William Harnett of the 4th United States Infantry encouraged them to turn "to some industry that will be likely to support ye independent of me". He explained that in "such exciting times as these no one but God can tell what solemn cricis might set in next."[139] Pennsylvania Irishman Felix Burns had similar hopes of boosting his mother's earning power. Having committed to sending along money for her rent, he suggested she put the remainder towards the purchase of a sewing machine.[140] As well as ostensibly preparing their families for the worst possible outcome, these men were eager to maintain a direct connection and influence in their loved ones lives—an

[137] Matthew Eagan to "Dear Wife" 14 April 1862, WC25637. The poem "Remember Me" was published in 1855 by Emma Garrison. See Emma Garrison, *A Collection of Brief Poems on Various Subjects* (Baltimore: Sherwood & Co., 1855), 22-24. With thanks to Carly Silver for the identification.
[138] Timothy Harrington to "My dear wife" 7 November 1861, Navy WC1580.
[139] William Harnett to "Dear Mother" 23 January 1862, WC20688.
[140] Felix Burns to "Dear Mother" 21 April [1863], WC123070.

act that in itself helped them to cope with both their protracted absence and the hardships they faced at the front.

3.4 Staying in touch: Newspapers & Letters

In order to maintain this sense of connection with home, Irish Americans relied heavily on the newspapers they were able to access, and the correspondence they were able to send and receive. Both helped to influence their thoughts and actions, and could profoundly impact their morale. This was true even for men who were unable to physically read or write, a disadvantage that was all too common among Irish American troops. For them, developing methods by which they could successfully navigate such impediments was an essential aspect of their service.

Much of the information Irish Americans garnered about the home front and the wider war effort came via the newspapers that they read and shared. The two most significant ethnic publications during the war were the New York *Irish American* and Boston-based *The Pilot*, both of which were read by many Irish American troops. In September 1861, American-born Francis Cullen of the 24th New York Infantry sent his thanks to Mick Conley "for the [Boston] pilot for it is the first one that i Seen Sence i Left home".[141] In early 1862 Kerry immigrant William Harnett of the 4th United States Infantry sent home a dollar for "my subscription for the [New York] Irish American News paper for 8 months". His Irish American news had been following him across the continent during his professional service. He asked his mother to go to the newspaper's premises and "Inform the proprietor that I received the first copy of his paper on the 3rd Jany. inst for the last six months since I left F[t] Hoskins Ogn. [Oregon] in July last."[142]

[141] Francis Cullen to "Deare mother" 17 September 1861, WC134902.
[142] William Harnett to "Dear Mother" 23 January 1862, WC20688.

Heretofore, the absence of evidence for the newspaper preferences of Irish American servicemen has forced historians to rely heavily on ethnic publications such as the *Irish American* and *Pilot* as a gauge for Irish opinion. Yet despite their popularity, the correspondence of ordinary Irish American soldiers and sailors demonstrates that they were substantially more likely to request non-ethnic newspapers that originated in their home localities, or which offered speciality content. Complaining about the lack of access to papers on the Peninsula, William Shea of the 23rd Pennsylvania Infantry told those at home to "send me the [Philadelphia] inqiurer onse in a while".[143] When William Martin of Corcoran's Irish Legion sought news following the Draft Riots, he requested the New York *Sunday Mercury*, which was particularly popular among Irish Americans, and which became known for publishing soldiers' correspondence.[144] The following month, his comrade in the Brigade, James Hand, requested both "the Sundy mercuray And the police gazete".[145] Henry Burns of the 59th New York was searching for escapism when he requested the entertainment focused New York *Clipper*, while William Cody of the 3rd Rhode Island Heavy Artillery was eager to see how his posting was depicted when he asked for "any of the Pictorials with the battle of Hilton Head pictured in it".[146]

When it came to Irish American newspaper consumption one publication stood supreme, particularly for the New York Irish, and it was not ethnically focused. James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald* was requested and referenced consistently by the Irish in uniform.[147] During the war, it provided the best of both worlds for the Empire

[143] William Shea to "Dear Mother" 27 April 1862, WC64963.
[144] William Martin to "My Dear Mother" 25 July 1863, WC79466.
[145] James Hand to "Dear Farther And Mother Brothers And Sisters" 9 August 1863, WC114954.
[146] Henry Burns to "My Dear Mother" 12 April 1863, WC103877; William Cody to "Dear Mother" 21 November 1861, WC10828.
[147] For a history of the newspaper see James Crouthamel, *Bennett's New York Herald and the Rise of the Popular Press* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1989).

State Irish—combining local coverage of New York with extensive reporting on the conflict. "send Me the New york heareld", "get the new york herald" and "you might have seen in the herald" were lines that reverberated through the correspondence of Irish Americans.[148] Accessibility to this paper was sometimes difficult, not least because of its Democratic leanings. This was especially true immediately after the Emancipation Proclamation, but no matter its availability, it was always in high demand.[149] In May 1863 Michael McCormick of the 65th New York Infantry was reporting that "We get the Herald every day and that is a great favour I suppose Joe Hooker thought that we were kept long enough without it so he granted us a great favour".[150] By November the supply had dried up again, and he complained that while it was always hard to get any papers on the march, "the Herald is very hard to get at pretty near any time".[151] When William Dolan wanted political news in 1863, it was to the *Herald* and the *Mercury* that he turned, in order "to here what the democrats are going to do this spring for they say that the democrats are going to End this war by May".[152]

The popularity and dominance of non-ethnic papers like the *Herald* in the reading lists of wartime Irish Americans challenges the widespread representativeness of Ireland-centric viewpoints expressed by publications like the *Irish American* and *Pilot*. For the majority, keeping up to speed with what was happening in their American homes and in their American world was their first priority. To be sure, many were also interested in staying abreast of goings-on in their old communities across the Atlantic,

[148] Patrick Carey to "Dear Mother" 23 [no month] 1864, WC56206; Denis Larkin to "dear father and mother"12 March? 1865, WC120669; Edward Hanlin to "Dear mother" 27 April [no year, but 1862], WC88981.
[149] On efforts to discourage criticism of Lincoln and emancipation within the army from 1863, which included limiting access to Democratic newspapers, see White, *Emancipation*, 40-41.
[150] Michael McCormick to "Dear Mother Sisters & Brothers" 24 May 1863, WC96255. Hooker was a Democrat, which was why McCormick thought he may have interceded to secure a supply.
[151] Michael McCormick to "Dear Mother Sisters & Brothers" 17 November 1863, WC96255.
[152] William Dolan to "Dear Mother & Sisters" 11 March 1863, WC25547.

but at least in so far as their newspaper choices would suggest, this was very much subordinated to the events and occurrences of most direct consequence to their daily lives.

While newspapers were important, it was the letters they sent and received that were the most crucial of these men's communications with home. In this, Irish American servicemen faced more pronounced practical challenges than any of their non-ethnic white comrades-in-arms. One of the most basic revolved around where they were to direct their correspondence. Most Irish Americans made their homes in rented accommodation, and while they tended to stay in the same neighbourhoods, their precise address could change frequently. In addition, many of the female members of Irish servicemen's families were domestics, some of them moving from one live-in position to the next. As a consequence, many men encountered the problem faced by the 4th New York's Patrick McConnell, who was forced to delay contact with home as he "did not know where to write".[153]

By far the most significant obstacle to communication faced by Irish American servicemen stemmed from the unenviable position they held as the least literate major white-ethnic group in the United States. In 1860 the Mid-Atlantic illiteracy rate was 4.4 percent among males and 6.5 percent among females, while in New England the respective figures were 3.9 percent and 5.4 percent.[154] The picture among Irish immigrants was markedly different. Analysis of New York City indicates that almost 20 percent of individuals in the heavily Irish Sixth Ward were illiterate in 1855. In 1860 the same city recorded 8 percent of Irishmen and 14 percent of Irishwomen over the age

[153] Patrick McConnell to "Dr Mother" 11 July 1862, WC109749.
[154] Harvey J. Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), 344.

of 20 as illiterate.[155] The actual rates of Irish illiteracy were almost certainly higher, as some immigrants chose not to divulge to census enumerators that they were unable to read and write, a fact demonstrated by comparison of census returns with information in the widows and dependents pension files. As a result, for thousands of Irish Americans in uniform, successfully communicating with loved ones required not only a consideration of how they would commit their words to paper, but how those words would then be comprehended when they reached home.

Although the majority of the correspondents examined in this study served as enlisted men, there was great variance in their degree of comfort with the medium of writing. At one extreme was the accomplished prose of those like future Private Edmund Dwyer of the 23rd Illinois Infantry, "Mulligan's Irish Brigade," who in a pre-war letter to his father back in Ireland hoped "it may not be inappropriate for me at this time to proffer to you my most sincere and heartfelt thanks for the Education you bestowed on me…it is sufficient to lighten and sweeten the burdens and toils of life. Gold or Silver you had not to give me, but you gave me that which is more valuable than either and which I prize more. I can never be thankful enough to you for it."[156] At the other end of the spectrum were the stilted efforts of the beginner, men like Private John Kelly of the 16th United States Infantry, who struggled through the following in 1863: "Dear farther and mother I receaved your letter of the 13th inst. To day and allso the the one enclosed to marey. wich i forwereded to to day. with a fue lines enclosed to her wich i wrote my selph."[157] Among Irish American correspondents, there were far more John Kellys than Edmund Dwyers.

[155] See Ó Gráda, "Locked in by Poverty?," 9. Ó Gráda's analysis is based on the IPUMS 1860 Census sample. He also demonstrates that the Irish were significantly more likely to "age-heap" than other groups, i.e. record their ages in years ending with a zero or five, another indicator of low literacy and numeracy rates.

[156] Edmund Dwyer to "My Dear and beloved Father" 5 July 1857, WC132012.

[157] John Kelly to "Dear farther and mother" 19 February 1863, WC114594.

Even Irish-born officers could find writing a laborious process. Francis McLaughlin from Co. Donegal was a pre-war engineer who served as a First Lieutenant of Battery D, 1st Pennsylvania Light Artillery. Such was his reticence to take up his pen that he appears to have had his early letters written for him.[158] However, his position as an officer demanded more, and he was soon doing his best to share his thoughts directly with his wife in Philadelphia. His struggles with sentence construction and spelling demonstrate the great effort he had to pour into each missive. On 5 February 1862 he opened his letter with "Deare whife i take this faverable opturtuiny of writhing those few linse to you to let you know that i am well at preastant thanks bee to god…", while that of 19 May 1862 began "Deare whife i receved your ltter Wich give me great plesher heare of you being well."[159]

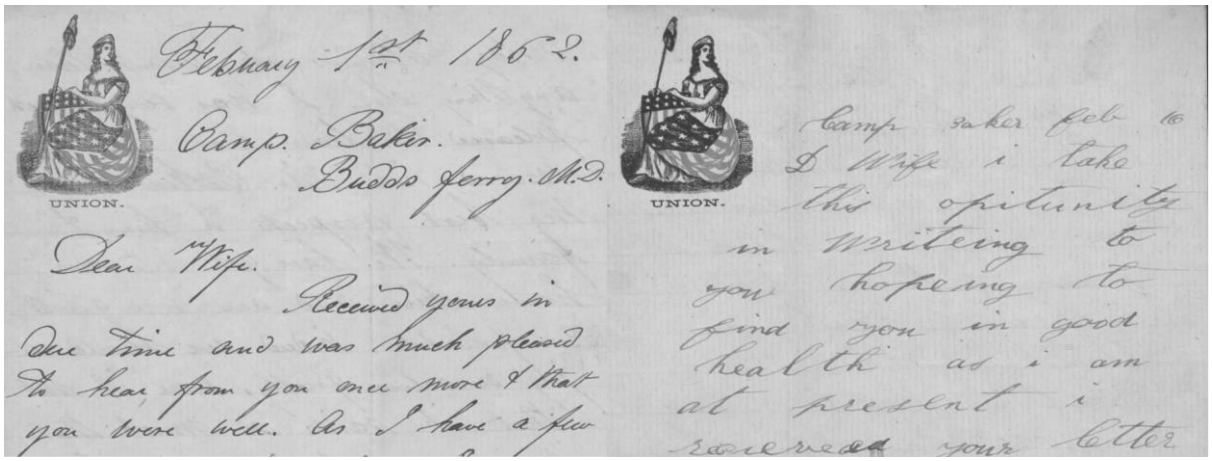
The formulaic language used by Francis McLaughlin to initiate his correspondence is typical of Civil War letters, which tended to be highly structured in nature. They usually employed stock opening and closing elements, with the body given over to inquiries and statements as to the health and wellbeing of individuals, a general outline of news, inquiries about goings on at home, and requests to be remembered to family and friends.[160] The reliance on convention was particularly prevalent among those—like Francis McLaughlin—who had less confidence in their epistolary abilities. The

[158] McLaughlin's letters written in Camp Curtin in June and early July 1861 display markedly better spelling and sentence construction than those which came afterwards. They also appear to be in a different hand. See Francis McLaughlin to "Dear wife" 21 June 1861 and Francis McLaughlin to "Dear wife" 12 July 1861, WC1056.

[159] Francis McLaughlin to "Deare whife" 5 February 1862 and Francis McLaughlin to "Deare whife" 19 May 1862, both in WC1056.

[160] For a discussion of the construction of letters by ordinary Civil War soldiers see Hager, *I Remain Yours*, 17-53. Many soldiers and sailors were making use of manuals that offered the inexperienced correspondent guidance on how their letters should be formatted, and what they should contain. Among the most popular during the Civil War was *Beadle's Dime Letter-Writer*, first published in 1861. See e.g. Louis Legrand, *Beadle's Dime Letter-Writer: A Perfect Guide to All Kinds of Correspondence* (New York: Beadle & Company, 1861). The formulaic structure and content of letters during this period was not limited to those in the military; examples abound among Irish emigrants. For discussion see Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*, 485-495; Moreton, "Letters from America".

widespread utilisation of formulaic elements has served to mask the numbers of Irish Americans who possessed no literacy skills whatsoever. Many of the Irish who "took their pen in hand" were in fact not doing so at all, but rather were relying on a scribe or amanuensis to convey their thoughts on their behalf.[161] Letter content rarely betrays any outward signs of this mediated literacy, as invariably the soldier or sailor was presented in the first-person as the "writer" of the correspondence. In instances where an illiterate or partially literate serviceman changed scribe, and where examples of both letters survive, this mediation becomes apparent. John Brennan from Co. Kildare is a case in point. The Massachusetts soldier wrote at least three letters to his wife in February 1862; while the first and last were composed in the same hand, that sent in the middle of the month was clearly set to paper by a different writer.[162]



Letters "written" by John Brennan of the 11th Massachusetts Infantry to his wife in February 1862, demonstrating the hands of two different scribes-and the slightly different formulaic introductions that each preferred. No evidence of Brennan's illiteracy is evident in their content.

[161] The lack of distinguishing features between letters mediated through a scribe and those directly authored by a soldier or sailor makes it extremely difficult to determine the literacy levels of many Irish American troops.

[162] John Brennan to "Dear Wife" 1 February 1862, John Brennan to "D Wife" 16 February 1862, John Brennan to "Dear Wife" 27 February 1862, all in WC27309.

There is little in the three surviving letters of James McGee written between May and November 1863 to betray his illiteracy. It was only after he lost his life to a torpedo explosion in 1864 that his comrade, fellow Irishman Andrew Mooney, provided an affidavit to the effect that he had "always endorsed the envelopes as deceased could not write, that he always wrote his letters…"[163] Tellingly, where the identity of scribes is revealed, they were usually fellow Irish Americans. At the end of a letter home from Daniel Driscoll to his parents following his 1861 naval enlistment, the scribe added a note:

> the Scribler of this Note is your old friend Peter Murphy you Give my Respects to Jery Taylor and Wife and family Cousin Daniel Driskel & Wif father tirney and Jery Holland Desires to Be Remember to you[164]

Towards the conclusion of a letter home to his wife in March 1862, James Carroll from Co. Kilkenny revealed that "I expected that I was Going home on furlough myself and the man that is writing this letter Pat Russell they were all stopt I am in a hurry my love to yourself and Poor Johny…"[165] James McNamara wrote the correspondence for his fellow Irish American John Fenton in Company B of the 90th New York Infantry. At the end of a May 1863 letter John dictated to his mother and sister, McNamara asked Mrs. Fenton to "let me know wheather you Received the letter I Sent you from Key west or wheather you got the Reliefe ticked [ticket] or not…".[166] James McNamara appears to have known the Fentons before the war, and they were almost certainly drawn from the same Brooklyn Irish community. Immediately after being mustered out,

[163] James McGee to "Dear Mother" 13 May 1863, James McGee to "Dear Mother" 22 June 1863, James McGee to "Dear Mother" 20 November 1863, Affidavit of Daniel Hammill and Andrew Mooney 7 August 1865, all contained within WC96027; CWMRA of James McGee, 132nd New York Infantry, NYSA.
[164] Daniel Driscoll to "Dear father & Mother" 1 December [1861], Navy WC3265.
[165] John Carroll to "Dear Wife" 22 March 1862, WC10231.
[166] John Fenton to "my Dear mother and Sister" 13 May 1863, WC89342.

McNamara provided John's mother with an affidavit to confirm that he "was a member of the same company with…John Fenton and wrote his letters."[167]

The preference for friends and fellow community members to act as scribes was driven by the level of trust required in what was a fundamentally unequal relationship. This inequality could be exposed when such relationships broke down. Irish American John Sheehan, incensed at being passed over for promotion to sergeant, demonstrated how this could manifest itself in a letter to his father:

> Our Captain was taken prisoner at gettysburg and they have put A Strange officer in command of the Co. and A mean son of A bitch he is he has recommended another fellow for A Sergt. after I acting and doing Sergts duty this long time and A fellow that is my inferior in every respect he cant write his own name for I have often wrote letters for him.[168]

The letters produced through mediation were generally not dictated transcripts, but rather were the product of a collaborative process between an individual and their scribe.[169] For those Irish American servicemen who were unable to read, scribes had the capacity to tamper with their messages home. As well as writing his letters, Scotsman Peter Campbell acted as something of an older brother to Laois native John Delaney in the ranks of the 18th Connecticut Infantry. There was some six years between them, John having been at most 18 on his enlistment, Peter around 24.[170] There is no evidence that either knew each other prior to service. Though they were from the same general area, they occupied different worlds; John was a paper-mill worker who lived with his

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[167] Affidavit of John Mendes and James McNamara 1 December 1864, WC89342.

[168] John Sheehan to "Dear Father" 12 September 1863, WC93487. Sheehan had been a member of the 105th New York Infantry until that regiment's consolidation with the 94th in March 1863.

[169] Lyons, *The Writing Culture*, 48-49. Just such a collaborative process has been observed between scribes and their clients in Mexico City during the 1990s. See Judy Kalman, *Writing on the Plaza: Mediated Literacy Practice among Scribes and Clients in Mexico City* (Creskill, New Jersey: Hampton Press 1999).

[170] William C. Walker, *The Eighteenth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers in the War for the Union* (Norwich, Connecticut: Gordon Wilcox for The Committee, 1885), 395; 1860 U.S. Census, Preston, New London, Connecticut, NARA; 1860 U.S. Census, Norwich, New London, Connecticut, NARA.

family in the Norwich suburb of Greenville, while Peter was a farmer's son from rural Preston. Nonetheless, John entrusted Peter with mediating his communications with home. He explained a lack of correspondence in April 1863 by stating that "I would wrote sooner but Peter being away I though I would wait till he come back…"[171] Yet Peter still felt he had the authority to undermine John's correspondence. John had enclosed a cheque for $20 with his April letter, but wrote five days afterwards saying he was out of money and asking his mother to send him back $1.50. Having duly written the message, Peter took it upon himself to add a postscript:

> Mr [sic.] Delaney Dear friend I told John when I come back that he wasent to send fore any money by any ones letter after this one if he did he wouldent get it because I wanted know what he wanted it fore he has be bouthering me this 2 days to write fore him because he knew…[172]

Such examples demonstrate both the stigma and pitfalls attached to illiteracy, which contemporary society connected with both poverty and criminality.[173] Even in relatively close relationships, illiterate Irish American servicemen often had to deal with the presumptions of superiority that their literate comrades held over them. In such circumstances, their preference was to turn first to those who understood the workings of literacy that were specific to their own community.

As well as serving as a catalyst for increasing their correspondence, the long hours of inactivity that were a staple of military life could present Irish American servicemen with unique educational opportunities for improving their literacy.[174] Nicholas Mahar, who struggled to find topics with which to fill his letters, wrote his sister in June 1864 that "the Capten told me tha was goin to hav a writing [s]Chool then i will try to rite ever[y] time…" Regardless of the writing school, it is evident that Nicholas was already

[171] John Delaney to "Dear Mother" 15 April 1863, WC39990.
[172] John Delaney to "Dear Mother", 20 April [1863], WC39990.
[173] Graff, *Legacies of Literacy*, 343.
[174] This was common throughout the military during the Civil War. As Hager notes, "The Civil War sparked ad hoc literacy education on a vast scale." See Hager, *I Remain Yours,* 12.

working hard to improve. At the end of the same letter, he proudly added a postscript: "this is the best leter i rot yet if i ever do i ges I will no how to rite when i Com home".[175] Martin Tiernan from Co. Roscommon was able to write home to his mother in the Five Points to tell her "I am improving in writing if I knew all the capital Letters I could Do first Rate". As if to emphasise the point, Martin practiced the capital "B" (for Company B) a total of 21 times at the end of his letter.[176]

Even those Irish American troops who were fully literate had to contend with the fact that many of the older generations—often the very individuals they were writing to—were not. The realities of differential inter-generational literacy meant that it regularly fell on younger generations to act as scribes and intermediaries within their own families, both for correspondence back to Ireland and with those at the front. While servicemen frequently addressed multiple family members in a single letter, it was often founded on an understanding that their siblings were acting as intermediaries. Though Thomas McCready began a letter of 30 November 1861 with "Dear Mother", he was aware that it was his sister who was reading it to her. Within a few lines he had slipped into referencing his mother in the third person: "I think it is better fore Mother…", "it will seave Mother…", "tell Mother…", despite the fact he was purportedly directing the correspondence to her.[177] Knowledge of a parent's illiteracy also allowed servicemen to deliver information intended solely for their siblings in letters to the entire family. Jeremiah Keenan had started his 17 April 1863 letter by addressing his mother, before following it with a section specifically for his brother Richard, knowing she could not read it. Outlining the harsh realities of military life, he confided: "I did not want to let

[175] Nicholas Mahar to "Dear Sister" 13 June 1864, WC107142.
[176] Martin Tiernan to "Dear Mother" 20 January 1862, WC4869.
[177] Thomas McCready to "Dear Mother" 30 November 1861, WC70669.

mother know about my hardship here I did not [want] her fretting about me I used to send her good letters to keep her from fretting."[178]

Those who had no access to a sufficiently literate individual within their immediate family group relied on more distant relatives, friends and neighbours to perform that function. Such relationships not only engendered trust between the parties involved, it made them participants in the emotional lives of the family. During this period of variant inter-generational literacy, it allowed correspondence to play a significant role in ethnic community cohesion. This played out on both sides of the Atlantic. In Co. Kerry, Charles Greaney's parents took his letters to their next door neighbour, who read them aloud for them.[179] Similarly, in College Point, Queens, Ann Dougherty relied on Patrick Curtin and Thomas Smyth, who lived nearby, to read her son's correspondence when it arrived from the Irish Brigade.[180] Over time soldiers could come to recognise the style of a scribe, as was the case when Martin Noonan from Co. Clare received a letter from his mother and sister in late 1863: "I noticed some of James Smith writing at the latter end of your letter why dont Jimmy ever write to me any more I always thought a gread deal of him & always wished him well & do still…"[181]

Written correspondence in such a partially literate society was by its very nature less private. Civil War soldiers and sailors were accustomed to their letters home being shared among family, friends and acquaintances. Having developed against the backdrop of mass immigration, the ordinary writings of antebellum Irish Americans had

[178] Jeremiah Keenan to "Dear mother" 17 April [1863], WC14441.
[179] Affidavit of James Graney and John Hearn 16 April 1869, WC139152.
[180] Affidavit of Patrick Curtin and Thomas Smyth 9 March 1867, WC93207.
[181] Martin Noonan to "Dear Sister & Mother" 16 August 1863, in WC71872. Families and soldiers alike were quick to recognise different hands, a fact vividly portrayed in Walt Whitman's 1865 poem "Come Up from the Fields Father". For a discussion of the poem's use of an "alien hand" from an epistolary perspective see Rebecca Weir, ""An Oblique Place": Letters in the Civil War" in Bernier *et al.* (eds) *The Edinburgh Companion to Nineteenth-Century American Letters* 281-282. Re family recognition of other hands see Hager, *I Remain Yours*, 172.

already taken on a particularly public aspect, serving as vital communal links between communities in Ireland and the United States.[182] This, when coupled with the high illiteracy rates among their communities, suggests that Irish American correspondence was likely the most public of any white ethnic group in the Union. Servicemen could expect their correspondence to be read aloud, normally multiple times, in a shared living space.[183] Though they could often predict who would read and hear their words, they could never be certain, particularly if the number of literate individuals in their immediate family group was small. This undoubtedly affected what they were willing to commit to paper, an important consideration when analysing their correspondence.[184] Even so, not all Irish Americans were happy to learn that their private business had the potential to become public back home. Christopher McGiff was horrified to learn that information he had sent to his (illiterate) mother had become common knowledge. He had met a woman from their Irish American community who "coud tell me evey thing that i Sent home in a letter and hade a laughy over it". "Dear mother you must keep your mind to your self not tell every one whate i send home" he cautioned.[185] Peter Finegan sent a similar warning to his his parents. "whoever writes letters for you I dont want such talking about affairs as was in the other I know wright from wrong…"[186]

[182] For the importance of correspondence in sustaining an "imagined community" between those at home and members of the diaspora (even those born into that diaspora), see Lyons, "Ordinary Writings", 18.

[183] This was an expectation that the majority of their contemporaries shared, no matter their ethnicity. See Hager, *I Remain Yours*, 42-43.

[184] Hager's analysis of the writings of ordinary Civil War soldiers found that although there was no censorship in place, there were many constraints on what semi-literate people would commit to letters. Hager, *I Remain Yours*, 74. Similarly, Martyn Lyons has demonstrated that the expected public nature of ordinary correspondence in this period and the highly ritualised form of letters often limited what a correspondent might choose to say. See Lyons, *The Writing Culture*, 76-77, 89. David Omissi found similar filtration in the mediated correspondence of Indian soldiers during the First World War, a group whose literary experience shares much in common with that of Irish American servicemen in the Civil War. See Omissi (ed) *Indian Voices*, 4-5.

[185] Christopher McGiff to "My Dear Mother" 26 May 1863, WC114360.

[186] Peter Finegan to "Dear Father & Mother" 29 September 1862, WC138689.

Demonstrably, literacy was not a requirement for engaging in the act of corresponding. Yet even with access to a scribe, illiterate and semi-literate Irish American troops attempted written communication with less frequency than their literate comrades.[187] The age-profile of Civil War correspondents also indicates that the older an illiterate serviceman was, the lower the probability he would engage with the written word, even when an amanuensis was available. Many of these older soldiers and sailors had reached adulthood in a society dominated by the oral tradition, often with the Irish language as their native tongue. The majority of available scribes were also their juniors, and they may have been reluctant to enter into a vulnerable, unequal relationship that necessitated the unmasking of their feelings. Despite their own literary shortcomings, younger illiterates had grown up in a different epistolary landscape, one which made them more familiar and comfortable with the processes of written communication than their older brethren.[188] As a result, it provided them with easier access to the written outlet that was so central to soldier and sailor morale during the Civil War. Accessing this outlet was more emotionally demanding for the older men, something which would have served to make their wartime experience all the more arduous.

A great many of the experiences, expectations and emotions that Irish Americans contended with during the American Civil War were directly comparable to those of their non-ethnic comrades. They reacted in similar ways to camp life and combat, and

[187] Indications that those Irish who were less-literate were less likely to participate in correspondence has also been identified in nineteenth century communication networks in Australia, where female letters are rare. See Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*, 473-474.

[188] The changes in postal communications during their formative years had been revolutionary. Reduction and revisions to postal rates in 1845 and 1851 had opened up the service to the masses, helping to spur an increase in the number of letters carried annually in the United States from 27 million in 1840 to 161 million by 1860. The system operated at its greatest efficiency in the major urban centres where the Irish congregated. See David M. Henkin, *The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 3, 22, 29, 31.

held similar expectations regarding the performance of their comrades and officers. They shared the same thirst for news from home, the same worries about maintaining their place within their communities. Where the greatest variance lay in these areas was in the scale and severity of some of the challenges they faced. Some were due to their working-class status, some to their ethnic and cultural background. Just as others did, many Irish Americans relied on their faith to help them through their wartime experiences—but it was harder for them to access the comfort of their religion; like almost everyone in uniform they sought to safeguard and provide for those at home—but economic circumstance made it harder to reconcile duty to flag and duty to family; and in common with almost all they longed for the comfort and succour that came with exchanging letters with loved ones—but they faced a steeper learning curve and more significant obstacles than most in doing so. As with much else about their service, their capacity to overcome these challenges was not uniform. It depended on individual factors like circumstance, resolve, age and adaptability.

Chapter Four

Reputation, Race & Politics

On 26 June 1865 Patrick Griffin was dragged across the New Orleans camp of the 6th Independent Battery, Massachusetts Light Artillery to face field punishment. Earlier that morning, despite protesting he was sick, the 18-year-old had been ordered to ride out to exercise the horses. When he was thrown from his mount and claimed to be too weak to ride or walk back to camp he was reported absent, and a guard sent to fetch him. Now he faced his officer's wrath. As his comrades looked on, Patrick was tied to a post and strung up by the thumbs, forcing him into a position which required him to stand on his toes. Within a few minutes he started to cry, complaining of headaches and begging "for God's sake to let him down". To quiet him his Captain ordered him gagged. A piece of wood was jammed into his mouth so tightly that it left the stick covered in the young man's blood. Eventually Patrick collapsed, vomiting as he was led off for a brief reprieve. He was strung up again in short order. Before long he passed out once more; within the hour he was dead. Officially, the cause of Patrick Griffin's demise was recorded as "apoplexy", but many of his outraged comrades held a different view. That very day they fired off an anonymous letter of condemnation to his mother, reported his "torturing to death" to the newspapers, and would eventually give post-war affidavits about what they felt had occurred. Unsurprisingly, Patrick's officers put forward a significantly different version of events, and their actions escaped serious censure.[1]

[1] Anonymous to "Mrs. Griffin" 26 June 1865, Affidavit of Alfred Hackett 19 September 1865, Affidavit of Patrick Carey 28 August 1866, Affidavit of George Bagshaw 28 August 1866, all in WC85142; *Cleveland Daily Leader* 8 July 1865; *Lowell Daily Citizen and News* 11 July 1865 and 16 August 1865; *Boston Traveler* 4 August 1865.

Patrick Griffin had been 13-years-old when he had arrived in Massachusetts from Athlone in 1860. Working first in the Lowell mills and then as a labourer, he had lied about his age in order to become a bounty volunteer in late 1863, and even then had required his widowed mother's consent to enlist as a minor. Patrick was no model soldier. He had deserted from his unit in May 1864, a charge that was changed to one of being absent without leave following his apprehension and the forfeiture of a portion of his bounty. In the months before his death, his officers had apparently grown weary of him being "constantly drunk and running away from camp." Investigating the incident in its aftermath, the Inspector General reported to General Sherman that Griffin "had refused to do duty" and that, although there were "no symptoms of liquor" on the day he died, the view of the surgeon was that his system had likely been weakened by his prior "debauchery".[2]

While the previous chapter assessed some of the many commonalities that Irish Americans shared with their fellows, this chapter examines some of the largely negative stereotypes that were ascribed and/or became particularly associated with Irish Americans during and after the war. The brief records of Patrick Griffin's tragic military life read like a rap-sheet of such stereotypes. He was a working-class "rough". He was motivated by money. He was a deserter. He was ill-disciplined. He abused alcohol. He was an immigrant. He was Irish. Just as they were seen as imbued with aggressiveness in combat, many in contemporary society—and in the officer class—viewed Irish

[2] Patrick Griffin CMSR, 15th Independent Battery, Massachusetts Light Artillery & 6th Independent Battery, Massachusetts Light Artillery; *Cleveland Daily Leader* 8 July 1865; Patrick had first seen service in the 15th Independent Battery, Massachusetts Light Artillery, transferring to the 6th in January 1865. For a more detailed discussion of the case, see Damian Shiels, "Killed by Torture? The Story of an 18-Year-Old Irishman's Death at the Hands of His Officers, New Orleans, 1865", *Irish in the American Civil War*, (2016), https://irishamericancivilwar.com/2016/07/23/killed-by-torture-the-story-of-an-18-year-old-irishmans-death-at-the-hands-of-his-officers-new-orleans-1865/, accessed 8 September 2020. It should be noted that although severe punishments such as that meted out to Patrick Griffin had become an increasing feature of the Union military as the war progressed, it was unusual for them to lead to a soldier's death.

American men as being possessed of a plethora of character flaws derived from their social and ethnic background. Harsh discipline was often seen as the only means of keeping these perceived flaws in check. This chapter explores these issues from the perspective of the ordinary Irish American serviceman and seeks to move beyond caricature in order to gain a fuller understanding of their origins, veracity and context. At the heart of the discussion lies class and cultural background, both of which played an intrinsic role in the actions of these men, and in reactions towards them. As well as their perceived defects of temperament, two other major factors which led to enduring negative perceptions of Irish American service are also considered from this perspective—their seemingly unstinting political adherence to the Democratic Party, and their sometimes stark racist attitude towards African Americans.

4.1 Irish American Manhood & Masculinity

Terms like the "roughs" and "rowdies" were used during the Civil War to describe the unruly dregs of the North's lowest social classes, men who were generally considered to be the most undesirable set in the Union military. Whenever and wherever these roughs and rowdies are mentioned, it quickly becomes apparent that large numbers of those categorised in this manner were Irish American.[3] Historian Lorien Foote has laid bare the extent of the class divide that often existed between these largely urban working-class men and the officer elites who sought to lead them. This divide was the cause of frequent friction in the military, and, as was touched upon in Chapter Two, was a fissure

[3] See Foote, *Gentlemen and the Roughs*, 8, 120; Lorien Foote, "Rich Man's War, Rich Man's Fight: Class, Ideology, and Discipline in the Union Army", *Civil War History* 5:3 (2005). Foote's work is extremely important in exposing the extent of the class divide within the Union military. The surnames of many of the examples of "roughs" she cites throughout her work clearly indicate that they were Irish American.

line that was visible even within Irish American communities and ethnic Irish regiments.[4]

The differing concepts of manhood that scholars have identified within the Federal military have been identified as a fundamental contributor towards these frictions. The middle and upper classes—especially evangelical Protestants—tended to espouse ideals of calmness, restraint, soberness, moral behaviour and duty.[5] More common among the lower classes was a form of masculinity that, in the words of one historian, lauded "physical courage, independence, class pride, and American patriotism". [6] To this could be added a respect for hard drinking, hard living and hard fighting. The majority of Irish Americans (and those who might be classed as roughs or rowdies) are regarded as having fallen somewhere towards the latter end of this spectrum.

Like everyone else in the 1860s United States, the Irish were products of a world dominated by ideals of Victorian masculinity. As such, some of the manly characteristics they exhibited were also common among their brothers-in-arms. Chapter Three demonstrated how closely Irish American concepts of duty in combat paralleled those of their non-ethnic comrades, and how important the performance of their duty to those at home was to their sense of self. Neither of these traits are attributes that have traditionally been associated with Irish American service. Ascertaining the extent to

[4] Recognising that class distinction could exist between Irish American officers and their men is particularly important given the frequency with which the statements of the Irish American officer class are taken as representative of the entirety of the Irish American experience.

[5] McPherson, *Cause and Comrades*, 26; Gordon, *A Broken Regiment*, 43; Foote, *Gentlemen and the Roughs*, 20; Carmichael, *Common Soldier*, 84. On manhood among northern elites in the military see Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai, *Northern Character: College-Educated New Englanders, Honor, Nationalism, and Leadership in the Civil War Era* (Fordham: Fordham University Press, 2016).

[6] Michael Kaplan, "New York City Tavern Violence and the Creation of a Working-Class Male Identity", *Journal of the Early Republic* 15:4 (1995), 592. For more on Irish American masculinity, particularly of the middle-classes, see Patricia Kelleher, "Class and Catholic Irish Masculinity in Antebellum America: Young Men on the Make in Chicago", *Journal of American Ethnic History* 28:4 (2009), 7-42.

which they otherwise adhered to the concept of martial manhood is challenging, especially as they did not make a habit of regaling their wives, mothers and sisters with frequent stories of drinking, fighting and "whoring". Nevertheless, their writings make it apparent that Irish American masculinity was significantly more complex (and individual) than a simple binary between restrained and martial manhood.[7]

Within the broad ranks of the Irish American soldiery, there were certainly those who conformed closely to the image of the Irish rowdy. Some who did so may have struggled with the vices that surrounded the world of the working-class poor, and may have been less anchored within a family unit. A case in point was Co. Antrim native Samuel Boyd. The New Jersey soldier had married his wife Ann on a Floating Bethel the very day they landed in New York, only to later abandon her for "a bad woman, a prostitute".[8] After he joined the army he sought to repair their relationship by having Ann join him in camp. His Captain had objected, telling Samuel "thear was pleanty of wimen hear in this pleas" and there was no need to send for her. The officer supposedly next threatened to reveal to Ann that Samuel had been sleeping around. During the heated exchange that followed his superior apparently also charged that Ann herself was "nothing but a prostute". Confronted by such a series of assaults on his manhood, Samuel snapped. "i lifted my gun and i fired at him…my pashing was tou high and my love was tou Strong fore you to Let ane wan say that abot you". As Samuel told it, a sergeant's intervention at the point of firing sent his shot high, and after a night in the guardhouse he was released without charge, having received an apology from the officer.[9] While he claimed his actions were driven by a love for his wife, it seems more

[7] On the development of the concepts of "restrained" and "martial" manhood see Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[8] Statement of David Anderson 18 July 1868; Special Agent Report 24 April 1869, both within WC132926.
[9] Samuel Boyd to "my Dear Ann" 2 December 1861, WC132926.

likely that Samuel's violent, unrestrained response was driven by a personal affront at the barbs and condescension flung at him by his officer—a hot-headed unbridled reaction that would have been seen as typical of a rowdy when faced with such a challenge.

While Boyd's case is extreme, elements of his experience fit into a wider pattern common among Irish Americans. There were undoubtedly many hard men who entered the service from the Irish American community, but they were rarely the one-dimensional rowdies of popular perception. It is apparent from their writings that large numbers sincerely hoped that their time in the military would prove transformative, instilling through discipline and duty the capacity for self-improvement, both for themselves as individuals and for their families.[10] Such hopes were often revealed at low points during their military service, and frequently while also referencing their previous wayward existence. As with Boyd, the hardships of military life accentuated these men's feelings of regret, prompting them to seek absolution for past transgressions. In 1862 William Barry of the Irish 10th Ohio Infantry wrote to his sister expressing "remorse for my wild life of a few years ago, and sorrow to think of the grief I must have caused all my friends by my conduct".[11] John Sullivan from Tralee, Co. Kerry also carried his guilt about how he had failed his family into the army. "God only knows how often I suffer thinking of the past", he confessed to his mother, but he was "hopeing and wishing for the future to redeem the past and be a Comfort to you the remainder of your days".[12] He assured her that there was "not the Slightest danger" of his getting drunk—something he seems to have struggled with in civilian life—as he

[10] This was a common theme for many ordinary soldiers, who saw the conflict as an opportunity both to redeem themselves and to build character, see e.g. Carmichael, *Common Soldier,* 3, 12.
[11] William Barry to "Dear Sister" 4 June 1862, WC138896.
[12] John Sullivan to "Dearest Mother" 19 February 1862, WC 8731.

was now "to much respected and I also respect myself to much for that".[13] Hugh O'Donnell from Co. Derry was another who became convinced of the transformative potential of service, telling his mother: "A Soldern life is A hard life to sirve 3 years for A Solders life aint Shure for 5 minets at A time but I head not complane for for I am a better man to day then I was when I left home."[14] Michael Foran of the 5th Pennsylvania Reserves saw his time in the army as the best way to change the man he was, telling his wife: "Whin i get at libirtey again i will be a dfirint man in timpor for i hav fond the plais that it would not do S to ras the mistif as i ust to do".[15] When Galwegian James Finnerty sought to explain to his Liverpool-based family why he had left his painting job to join the 72nd Illinois Infantry in August 1862, he simply stated that he took the step "thinking that I can better myself".[16] For many of those who held with the positive redemptive potential of military service, its promise was derived from more than just the discipline and responsible manliness they hoped it could instil. As will become apparent in Chapter Five, it also came from the self-sacrifice of fighting for a cause that large numbers of them sincerely believed in.

While improving themselves as men was a major goal for many Irish Americans in service, some had not reckoned with the loss of freedom that went hand-in-hand with a life in the ranks. Despite their social status, they were proud and often fiercely independent, and some struggled to adapt. This is despite, and perhaps partly because of, the constraints of the society they or their parents had left behind in Ireland. Once in the United States they had begun to imbibe the republican ideals that caused many volunteers across the North to grapple with this loss of free will, particularly given their

[13] John Sullivan to "Dear Mother" 12 December 1861, WC8731.
[14] Hugh O'Donnell to "Dear Mother" 15 November 1863, WC74835.
[15] John Foran to "Dear Wife" 6 October 1861, WC126742.
[16] James Finnerty to "Dear Mother" 14 August 1862, WC31621.

conviction that they were the equal of those who sought to command them.[17] With his reference to getting "libirtey again", Michael Foran touched on this restrictive aspect of military service. Those who articulated concerns about their loss of freedom in uniform generally did so by describing their treatment as comparable to that of "slaves" or "dogs".[18] Irish immigrant Cornelius Donahoe had rushed to war in the summer of 1861, but reports his father was considering enlisting the following October prompted him to fire off a stark warning. "tell him if he wants to make a slave of him self to list he will starve to deth and be kicked around like a dog without a tail…it is Bad enough for one of us to go to divel…"[19] Cornelius's ire had not dimmed by the following February, when he proclaimed: "if i was at home now the man that would ask me two List i would Shoot him".[20] James Sharkey enlisted despite the remonstrations of his brother John—then serving with the 140th New York Infantry—who had warned him that being in uniform was to "live the life of a dog".[21] The difficulties these men had in adapting to the rigid hierarchical system of the military occasionally led to altercations with officers, such as was the case with Samuel Boyd. However, despite their complaints, and their reputation, most Irish Americans ultimately adjusted and accepted their lot, going on to perform the duties expected of them during the war.

Although many Irish Americans were tarred with the same brush as some of the wilder elements within their class and ethnic group, in reality the majority were neither rowdies nor roughs. Instead they adhered to what might be regarded as a more moderate

[17] On the topic of how ordinary soldiers viewed themselves as the equal of their officers, and as a result conformed to their own sense of duty, see Foote, *Gentlemen and the Roughs*, 153. On Irish American resistance to authority in the military see also Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair*, 42-43.

[18] This was another feature that was common among many northern Civil War soldiers, see Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 58.

[19] Cornelius Donahoe to "Dear f Mother" 10 October 1861, WC56405.

[20] Cornelius Donahoe to "Dear father and Mother" 8 February 1862", WC56405.

[21] James Sharkey to "Dear Mother" 20 September 1863, WC28175; Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 153-154.

form of martial manhood. They respected physical courage and accepted occasional exuberance and excess as a part and parcel of life. They jealously guarded their independence and their sense of equality, which had come hard won in their new home. They rarely complained about the morality or general behaviour of their comrades, and viewed pastimes such as alcohol consumption, gambling and music as intrinsic elements of who they were. But they were not without restraint. They and their communities considered duty to family as an integral part of manhood, and most men in uniform regarded doing their duty in service in the same light. As we shall see below, if overindulgence had a consistently negative impact on the lives of themselves or others, it was seen as a failing. Indeed, many who had come up short in this regard came to see the military as offering a potential path towards a greater level of restraint, and through it a path to redemption.

4.2 Alcohol

Few ascribed traits contributed as greatly towards negative stereotypes of Irish Americans in the 1860s United States than their supposedly unrestrained relationship with alcohol. It was seen as a vice that was particularly prevalent among roughs and rowdies, and its known or even suspected abuse frequently lay at the root of harsh disciplinary measures. Long before the guns starting firing, alcohol had been an intrinsic element of both Irish and German immigrant culture, and their consumption of it had been repeatedly targeted by nativist reformers. Although every stratum of society in the mid-nineteenth century was awash with alcohol, its abuse was regarded as a particular failing of the lower classes, for whom it represented one of the few escapes from the hardships of everyday life. While Irish American troops earned an especial

reputation for excess, alcohol use and abuse was a major issue across all classes, ranks and armies during the American Civil War.[22]

There is no doubt that alcohol abuse was a major scourge within working-class Irish American communities. Indeed, the widespread impact of alcoholism on individual families is a recurring theme through countless Civil War widow and dependent pension applications. This fact was widely recognised within Irish America, where abstinence societies played prominent roles in society and were highly visible during events such as St. Patrick's Day parades. Typical of the message they sought to convey was that emblazoned on the banner of the South Brooklyn Temperance Cadets of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1864: "All's Right—Dad's Sober".[23] Some Irish American servicemen, particularly those of a more religious persuasion, were influenced by the temperance message and the opportunity the military provided for a new start. The encouragement and popularity of the temperance movement among Irish units was a direct response to the dangers of excess. Early in the conflict, such sentiments led seven hundred of the Irish Brigade to take the temperance pledge.[24] Yet for the great majority, abstinence was not something they were prepared to consider. Instead, thousands of Irish Americans held with the policy of recent immigrant Edward Fitzpatrick, who wrote to his wife from the Petersburg front in 1865: "I am a very temperate young man i dont drink Any thing only when i can Get it".[25]

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[22] On the wide-ranging abuse of alcohol in the military, see Scott C. Martin, "A Soldier Intoxicated Is Far Worse Than No Soldier at All": Intoxication and the American Civil War", *The Social History of Alcohol and Drugs* 25:1-2 (2011), 67; Ramold, *Baring the Iron Hand*, 123-124. Ramold recounts how the supposed Irish love of alcohol was also used to diminish Irish performance in battle, through an oft-repeated tale that explained away an Irish soldier's heroic actions by revealing they were all so he could retrieve his whiskey flask. See Ramold, *Baring the Iron Hand*, 99.

[23] *New York Irish American* 26 March 1864.

[24] John F. Quinn, "Father Mathew's Disciples: American Catholic Support for Temperance, 1840–1920", *Church History* 65:4 (1996), 628.

[25] Edward Fitzpatrick to "Dear Wife" 23 January 1865, WC142303.

For some, alcohol's grip brought dire consequences, in the process helping to contribute towards the Irish American reputation for ill-discipline in camp. When William Meehan lost his father who had been serving with him to disease, he informed his mother that it had given him a wake-up call. "I have made a resolution to be better now than when he was living I will avoid every bad practice".[26] Despite his intentions, a few weeks later he found himself before a court-martial for being "grossly intoxicated" while on guard. Found guilty, he was fined $10 and ordered to have a twenty-four pound ball attached to his left leg for thirty days.[27] Waterford native Garrett Condon paid a much higher price for a similar infraction, being sentenced to 12 months hard labour without pay on Ship Island off Mississippi. Condon's actions also saw him fail in his familial duty, forcing his wife to launch a desperate appeal directly to General Banks for clemency "to keep his wife and children from Starving".[28] John Costello of the 1st Massachusetts Heavy Artillery provided a cautionary tale relating to the excesses of his comrade William Sheehan. His fellow Irish American was "shot at by the guard in Alexandria and was wounded in the hand which I think he will lose. He was drunk at the time and that was the result".[29]

Alcohol abuse occasionally led to Irish American servicemen paying an even higher price. A letter arrived at Eleanor Hogg's door in Ireland in 1862 informing her not only that her husband had died in the Irish Brigade, but that her son Pat, a Union sailor, had "got thirste" after receiving his pay and "fell down one Of the Hatch weays of the

[26] William Meehan to "My dearly beloved Mother" 2 August 1863, WC31563.
[27] Proceedings of a Trial Court which Convened at Hilton Head SC 29 December 1863, CMSR of William Meehan, Company G, 47th New York Infantry, NARA.
[28] Mary Condon to "Honourable General" 21 September 1863, CMSR of Garrett Condon, Company G, 3rd Massachusetts Cavalry, NARA.
[29] John Costello to "Dear Sister" 21 April 1862, WC58007. Sheehan was sentenced to one year hard labour, but deserted shortly afterwards, see CMSR of William Sheehan, Company A, 1st Massachusetts Heavy Artillery, NARA.

vessel…and died soon After wars".[30] The combination of pay and ready access to alcohol often proved a disastrous mix, no matter a man's ethnicity. Michael McCormick of the 65th New York told his family that "When Pay day comes there is always a rush of our men down to the City to get drunk there is as many as fifty down at a time", part of a culture of drinking that led to a "shocking affair" when an intoxicated sentry shot and killed a Corporal.[31] James McGee from Co. Louth made it clear that while many in the Irish Brigade may have taken the abstinence pledge, the rhetoric did not match reality. Some men's commitment had already waned by early 1862, when he wrote that "Ever since pay day we had to have a Double Guard on the camp for the purpose I am sorry to say of keeping the Gin Figs in camp."[32]

However much men may have wanted to drink, availability was always an issue. The more ready access of officers to alcohol was often remarked upon with envy. When Tyrone native Bernard Curry of Corcoran's Irish Legion saw that Thomas Francis Meagher had come on a visit to his officers in 1864, he speculated: "i Supose the did not Come out with dry lips".[33] James Harrigan of the 72nd Pennsylvania Infantry told his mother in 1862 that when it came to alcohol, "the poor private you know cant get any of it, it is for the Big men the officers".[34] Other Irish served under officers who were not afraid to take drastic measures to restrict the men's opportunities to obtain alcohol. In an effort to stem drunkenness in the 1st New York Infantry, as Archey

[30] Patt Winn to "Dear Ant" 12 September 1862, WC98727.
[31] Michael McCormick to "Dear Mother Sisters & Brother" 12 January 1862, WC96255.
[32] James McGee to "Dear Sister" 29 January 1862, WC98814. This was a ubiquitous problem for regiments in camp, particularly early in the war. Irish American John Ryan of the 28th Massachusetts remembered after the conflict that in January 1862 "there was a little settlement back of the camp called Dublin and there was a good deal of trouble caused by the men running the guards, going to Dublin and getting intoxicated and then being put into the guard house. Of course, each man had his friends in the company and when one of his friends was on guard duty, he would allow his chum to slip out". Sandy Barnard (ed) *Campaigning with the Irish Brigade: Pvt. John Ryan, 28th Massachusetts* (Terre Haute, Indiana: AST Press, 2001), 23.
[33] Bernard Curry to "Dear Mother" 12 August [no year, but 1864], WC137303.
[34] James Harrigan to "My Dear Mother" 1 May 1862, WC3130. Emphasis in original.

Laverty informed his mother, "thay Had to break open the Sutler Stores and Spill the Barrells of licquor".[35] Thousands of Irish Americans tried to circumvent alcohol shortages using any means they could, often with the complicity of wives and parents at home, who hid drink in packages sent to the front. William Delaney asked his mother for "a small bottle of good brandy in a little box and cover it with tobacco…i hav not got a drop since i Left".[36] Servicemen congratulated those at home when the ruses they devised proved successful. Henry Burns was delighted with his mother and her tenement neighbour for successfully concealing gin and brandy in a box for him, stating that they had "done it well" and had given "Me and My Comrades that is in the tent with me A joley good Night".[37]

Certainly a great many sought out drink whenever the opportunity arose. The extremely limited free time most men had enjoyed due to their long working hours in civilian life had encouraged occasional opportunistic "sprees", a pattern of consumption that was replicated in the military. This in turn undoubtedly led to many disciplinary infractions. But whereas the image of the Irish rowdy was of one who consistently revelled in alcoholic excess, most Irish regarded incessant drinking as a weakness and failing, especially if it had a demonstrably negative impact on the lives of themselves or their dependents. John Joseph Casey of the 2nd United States Infantry typified such sentiments. Having run afoul of "our old friend John Barleycorn" [whiskey] once too often, he felt he had to "issue the edict of banishment", as "it came very near putting the veto on me this last time and if I give it another chance it will be my fault".[38] Even legendary figures like Thomas Francis Meagher were not exempt from disapproving commentary. The Irish Brigade's much-loved leader suffered badly from alcohol abuse

[35] Archey Laverty to "Dear Mother" 1 August 1861, WC100498.
[36] William Delaney to "Dear Mother" 6 November 1861, WC8306.
[37] Henry Burns to "Dear Mother" 2 April 1864, WC103877.
[38] John Joseph Casey to "Dear Ben" 29 January 1865, WC98455.

during his service, something that the otherwise devoted William McCarter described as the General's "one besetting sin." McCarter was speaking from experience, given that he had saved Meagher from collapsing into a bonfire while in a drunken stupor in November 1862.[39] Writing home the previous July, John Dougherty had been wondering why their Chaplain Father Dillion—someone whom he felt was "a very good man"—had been placed under arrest. The only conclusion he could draw was that it had been "a drunken freak of Genel Meagher".[40] Meagher's drinking problem was well known within the Brigade, though the men rarely commented publicly on it. That they did not do so was borne from both a respect for their commander, and an awareness of the scrutiny and ethnic responsibility that was their lot as the premier Irish formation in service.

Alcohol was undeniably important to Irish American servicemen. It was something that they valued not only for its role in acting as a release and social lubricant, but also for its perceived health benefits in combating colds and chills. Kerry immigrant and 99th New York soldier John Sullivan's interaction with hard spirits was likely typical:

> you want to Know if I get any Drink here. I have not tasted any Liquor or get any except what you sent that I was very glad to get it is used up long since, when we go over to Fort Munroe any of us we get an Occasional glass of Lager Beer and that Inferior this is the first Cold Day we have had this Winter a nip of Brandy wold be very good twice a Day I can Assure you.[41]

While the central role alcohol played in Irish cultural life meant that men like John Sullivan were often more visibly associated with drinking than other groups, its use in

[39] McCarter, *My Life in the Irish Brigade*, 16, 70-71.

[40] John Dougherty to "Dear Mother" 19 July 1862, WC93207. The extent to which Meagher's drinking impacted his battlefield performance—allegations levelled against him by high profile detractors following Antietam and Fredericksburg, remains unclear. Certainly the devoted men of his Brigade were careful not to discuss it at any length, and no-one ever broke ranks to suggest it impaired his actions in combat. A future consideration of the potential impact the Brigade's baptism of fire on the Peninsula may have had on Meagher's drinking habits would be a worthwhile study.

[41] John Sullivan to "Dear Mother" 12 December 1861, WC8731.

the military was almost ubiquitous. While some abused it, the majority were more moderate in their consumption, their service interspersed with only occasional binges, or "sprees" that were dictated by location, opportunity and circumstance.[42] The reality was that regardless of stereotype, for the bulk of these men's time in the military alcohol was largely inaccessible. "a little of the Cratars [whiskey]" was, as James Harrigan put it in 1862, "hard to be had".[43] Nevertheless, their ethnic and class reputation preceded them, often unjustly—sometimes leading to incidents such as the tragic case of Patrick Griffin, whose officer's presumptions and preconceptions caused them to mistake illness for drunkenness.

4.3 Desertion

Just as they were associated with excessive alcohol consumption, Irish Americans were also regarded as being more likely to desert.[44] Particularly compelling evidence to support this assumption has been forwarded by Dora L. Costa and Matthew E. Kahn in their major statistical study of Union servicemen, which found that Irish and British-born soldiers were 1.4 times as likely to desert when compared to their native-born comrades.[45] Yet this picture is more complex than it may first appear. Ryan Keating's

[42] This was common across the Union military, with drinking increasing around special occasions, e.g. see Gordon, *Broken Regiment*, 97. For a discussion of this in an Irish and German context, see Ramold, *Baring the Iron Hand*, 142-143.

[43] James Harrigan to "My Dear Mother" 1 May 1862, WC3130.

[44] In the region of one in every eleven Union soldiers deserted at some point during the war. All told, the Union army suffered 421,627 desertions, 260,339 from among the enlisted men and 161,286 in the form of absent draftees. See Ramold, *Baring the Iron Hand*, 220.

[45] Dora L. Costa and Matthew E. Kahn, *Heroes and Cowards: The Social Face of War* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 100. Costa and Kahn based their work on a sample of 40,000 enlisted white Union soldiers drawn from 331 companies in 284 regiments and 6,000 black Union soldiers from 52 companies in 40 regiments. The Irish-born were also more likely to desert in the Confederate service, see Gleeson, *Green and the Gray*, 221. The most detailed examination of desertion during the American Civil War remains Ella Lonn's volume first published in 1928. See Ella Lonn, *Desertion during the Civil War*, reprint with an introduction by William Blair, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

in-depth analysis of the ethnic Irish 9th Connecticut, 17th Wisconsin and 23rd Illinois regiments found that desertion rates in those units were lower than the average for mixed formations.[46] During the war itself, those who regularly dealt with desertion often felt immigrants were more likely to abandon their posts than the native-born. Provost Marshal General James Barnet Fry expressed precisely that view when he speculated that "a more minute examination" of the statistics of the army "would reveal the fact that desertion is a crime of foreign, rather than native birth, and that but a small proportion of the men who forsook their colors were Americans."[47] Such judgements may have been built on prejudicial foundations, but the available information does suggest that men who had been born in Ireland deserted the northern military at higher rates than many other identifiable groups. An examination of their thoughts, actions and circumstances helps to reveal why that may have been the case.

Invariably, Irish American desertion has been framed primarily in ideological terms, regarded as an indicator that they were not as invested in the ideals of the United States as others in uniform. Particular note is made of the Irish American turn against the war in early 1863, when mounting losses and the changing war aims heralded by the Emancipation Proclamation led some to abandon the cause.[48] The period between the announcement of the Proclamation in October 1862 and February 1863 did witness the highest levels of desertion experienced by the North during the war, and no doubt many Irish Americans were among those who chose to abandon the Stars and Stripes at that

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Steven J. Ramold offers a particularly useful analysis of Union desertion, its causes and consequences in *Baring the Iron Hand*, 219-263.

[46] Keating, *Shades of Green*, 126. Martin Öfele likewise argues that immigrants did not desert at higher rates than the native-born. See Öfele, *True Sons of the Republic*, 160.

[47] This extract from Fry's report was reproduced in Benjamin Apthorp-Gould's *Investigations in the Military and Anthropological Statistics of American Soldiers*, see Apthorp-Gould, *Investigations*, 29. The inclusion of such prejudiced speculation within a statistical compilation on which all Civil War scholars now rely serves as a cautionary warning regarding the degree of uncritical trust that can be placed in military records and statistical analyses dealing with immigrants from this period.

[48] Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 4, 81.

point.[49] Irish Americans were also prominent among late war desertions, when enlistment conditions had been created that proved especially tempting for working-class men, drawing them out of their home communities in search of opportunities further afield. As Judith Lee Hallock has demonstrated in her analysis of Brookhaven, New York, where financial inducements were used to draw non-resident Irish Americans to the locality for the purpose of enlisting, the severing of community connection often meant that men felt more ready to abandon their military obligations.[50] However, as highlighted in Chapter Two, this is a fact that has to be weighed against the evidence that Irish Americans were also proportionately more willing to enlist during the later war period than native-born white Americans.[51]

No matter when in the war Irish Americans deserted, the primacy of ideology as a driver in their decision is open to question. A detailed analysis of the Irish Brigade's 63rd New York Infantry found that a number of occasions during the war outstripped this October 1862-February 1863 period for desertion rates. One of them came during the campaign movements of August/September 1862, which presented the first real opportunity to depart since the Brigade had initially tasted action, while another was in September/October 1863, when the regiment was taking in a major influx of recruits in New York. All were dwarfed by the exodus experienced by the regiment in November 1861, immediately prior to its departure from New York.[52] While a lack or loss of

[49] On this representing the period of highest desertion, see White, *Emancipation*, 85.
[50] Hallock's analysis demonstrated that from late 1862 the town supervisor from Brookhaven travelled outside the locality on the hunt for recruits. Of the 240 men he found between August and November 1862, 109 were foreign-born, and 74 of them were Irish. The vast majority were not from the area, and these men showed a greater propensity to desert. See Judith Lee Hallock, "The Role of the Community in Civil War Desertion", *Civil War History* 29:2 (June 1983), 128-129.
[51] See Chapter Two.
[52] See Damian Shiels, "Charting Desertion in the Irish Brigade, Part 1", Irish in the American Civil War, (2016), https://irishamericancivilwar.com/2016/08/14/charting-desertion-in-the-irish-brigade-part-1/, accessed 4 February 2020. Hallock's analysis likewise found that men were most likely to desert soon after entering the military; the majority of the deserters she identified left within a month of enlistment. Hallock, "The Role of the Community", 129.

conviction for the cause may have been a factor in some of these cases, it was greatly overshadowed by more direct and personal concerns, such as coming face-to-face with the realities of military life, campaigning and battle, and the lack of financial security and stability that afflicted many men and their families.

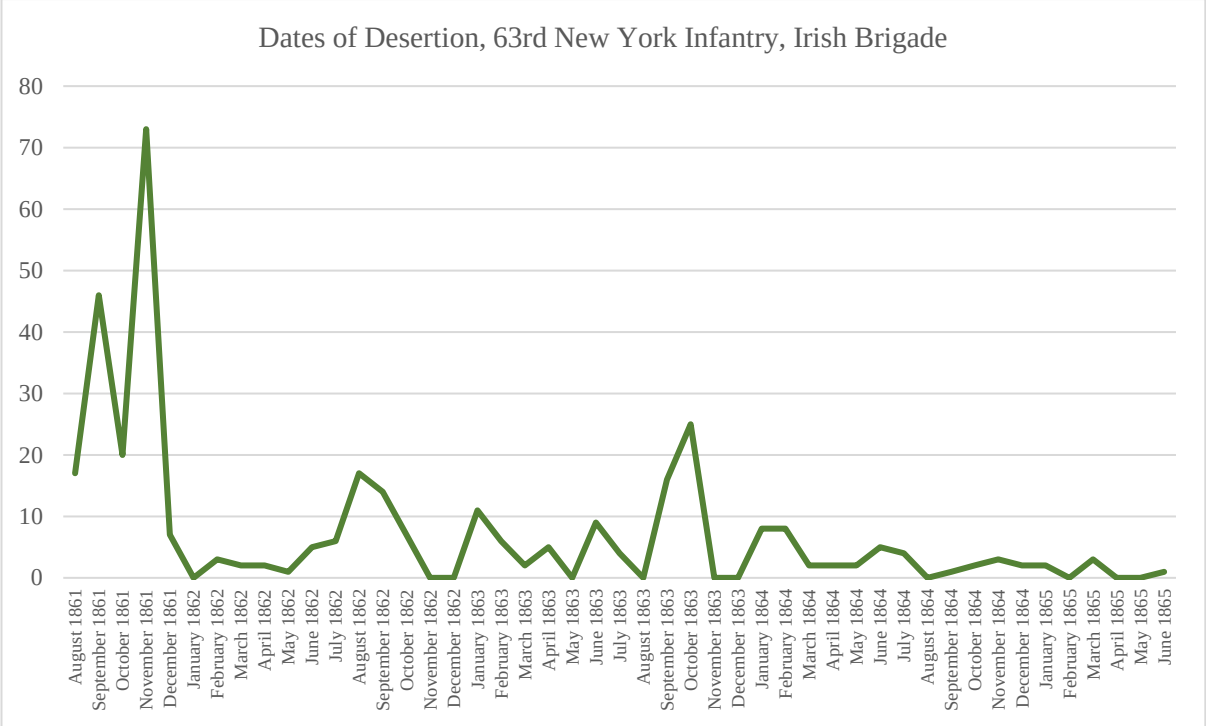

Figure 6. Desertion rates in the 63rd New York Infantry, Irish Brigade, through the Civil War. Drawn from individual soldier data with the Annual Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of New York.

The fact that the primary spark behind desertion was rarely ideological is supported by Irish American discussion of it in their correspondence.[53] They were most likely to contemplate absconding when interactions with home had generated concern, particularly if those concerns were economic. If such worries coincided with a moment when their morale was already affected by micro factors within their unit or severe and/or unsuccessful campaigning, it greatly increased their willingness to consider

[53] For a discussion of Irish American ideological convictions during the war, see Chapter Five.

departing. As it was for most Civil War servicemen, the role of family was an intrinsic element of the story of Irish American desertion. Historian Peter Carmichael has identified that many of the men who deserted Union forces during the war did so as part of a "collaborative act" with those at home.[54] Irish Americans struggled the most when their sense of duty towards family came into direct conflict with their sense of duty to uniform. Many northern soldiers viewed duty to family and duty to Union as fundamentally linked, but this was based on the understanding that the military would not hinder their ability to provide for their support.[55] Through failures such as those surrounding army pay, the military hampered that ability with such frequency that it seems remarkable Irish American working class desertion was not significantly more commonplace. Men on the economic margins were less capable of enduring the financial peaks and troughs of wartime than were their more affluent fellows, and it is no surprise that Costa and Kahn's statistical study of the Union military demonstrated the poorest deserted more. Illiterate men were more than 1.5 times more likely to desert than literate; men with no personal property were more likely to desert than those whose family had $500 in personal property; and men who had been labourers—the bottom rung of the employment ladder—were more likely to desert than those from other occupations.[56] As the most readily identifiable working class cohort of whites in northern service, Irish Americans were strongly represented in all those categories.

Dan Sheehan was one of those Irish Americans who decided to illegally depart the fold. He deserted the army in April 1862, though he afterwards enlisted in the naval service. While his justifications go unrecorded, circumstantial evidence suggests that difficulties at home were a major contributory factor. By 1863 he was advising his

[54] See Carmichael, *Common Soldier*, 177.
[55] Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair,* 30.
[56] Costa and Kahn, *Heroes & Cowards,* 100-102.

soldier brother John to follow him in abandoning his regiment. His reasoning was their father's worsening illness and financial situation; Dan argued that if John deserted he would be in a position to "go home and comfort" their failing parent. Facing into an unenviable choice of competing duty to regiment and to family, John proposed a third way. He advised his father to "write to the president and explain your situation" in the hope that he might garner an honourable discharge.[57] John's refusal to follow his older brother's suggestion, despite the gravity of their father's position, was driven by a reluctance to tarnish his own character with the taint of desertion. In the main, this sense of duty towards uniform and comrades, together with concerns about potential disciplinary repercussions, stayed the hand of most Irish Americans in similar situations.

Even men who did decide to desert did not necessarily do so with the intention of permanently abandoning the military.[58] Those who followed through frequently returned of their own volition—or were caught. In such instances there was often a reluctance to attempt it again, particularly as punishments grew more severe from 1863 onwards.[59] Daniel Reddy of the 16th Massachusetts Infantry had been listed as a deserter when he failed to return from his veteran furlough in April 1864. When he eventually reappeared of his own accord 19 days late, his Captain preferred charges against him. In the end, his officer accepted the explanation that the absence had been due to the longer than anticipated time it had taken to settle the estate of his father, who had just died. However, that acceptance only came after the summer's fighting, when

[57] Dan had originally served in Company I of the 105th New York Infantry with his younger brother John. NYMRA for Dan Sheehan and John Sheehan, 105th New York Infantry, NYSA. John Sheehan to "Dear Father" 18 March 1863, WC93487.

[58] Once found to be missing, Union soldiers were reported AWOL (absent without leave). If they returned within ten days, they only faced the consequences of this lesser charge—after that period they were listed as deserters. See Ramold, *Baring the Iron Hand,* 224-225.

[59] Discipline grew harsher as the influx of new men led to challenges in maintaining order. See Foote, *Gentlemen and the Roughs*, 70, 128-129.

Daniel had repeatedly and consistently demonstrated his reliability and bravery.[60] Limerick immigrant Dan Dillon had already deserted once when he began to receive renewed pleas from family for his return home in 1863. The 10th Illinois Cavalryman snapped back that he was "not gowing home until the war is over I have Deserted once and that ought to Be enough and not to do It again sow you need not expect me home untill I get to go home Deacent or dead".[61] Dillon was writing in early 1863, a period during which he voiced extreme anger about the changing nature of the war and his displeasure at the prospect of fighting with African Americans. But he did not consider those views to be sufficient reason to risk his "decency" by abandoning his post. When Thomas Diver's thoughts turned to desertion in 1862, he was contemplating only a short absence. The 69th Pennsylvania soldier began planning a return to see his mother in Philadelphia, who was "lonely at home". His strategy to take "French leave" in order to "cheer her up" went so far that he bought "a pair of Pants and an old Coat to go home with But on further consideration I changed my mind."[62] When James Harrigan and his colleagues were paid off in December 1861, "all had a merry time" and some decided to spend their wages–without permission–in Philadelphia, though doubtless many subsequently made their way back to the ranks.[63] As such incidents make clear, just as a lack of wages could lead to economic pressures at home, pay musters could also precipitate a rash of temporary and permanent desertions, something the military authorities had to constantly weigh up.

Regardless of whether a departure was intended to be temporary or permanent, men had to reflect on the potential repercussions they might face. When James Welsh of the

[60] Captain R.F. Lombard to Adjutant of 16th Massachusetts Infantry, 1 July 1864 in CMSR of Daniel Reddy, Company F, 16th Massachusetts Infantry, NARA.
[61] Dan Dillon to "Dear mother" 29 February 1862 [but actually 1863], WC88094.
[62] Thomas Diver to "Dear Mother" 2 February 1862, WC38010.
[63] James Harrigan to "My Dear Mother" 10 December 1861, WC3130.

82nd Pennsylvania Infantry was asked by those at home to go AWOL if he was unable to procure a furlough, he responded: "as for desserting it hard to do where are are now and besid it is runing a greate risk of being brought back and punished by the military law".[64] Thomas Monaghan of the 95th Pennsylvania Infantry was forced to bear witness to the worst of those repercussions when he and his brigade comrades were compelled to watch the execution of a deserter in August 1863. "it was a hard sight to look at. to see a poor fellow dying as a deserter".[65] These executions were carried out to have precisely this impact and they affected the men greatly, something evidenced in the often-detailed accounts they provided for those at home. These executions proved effective as a military measure, as there tended to be a reduction in desertion rates in their immediate aftermath.[66]

Even among those men for whom financial hardship was not a primary consideration, it often remained interactions with home that stimulated thoughts of desertion. The recent death of James Hand's brother aboard USS *Cincinnati* was the likely catalyst for his parent's appeal for him to wrangle a medical discharge from the 164th New York Infantry. Knowing such an approach would fail, he suggested an alternative. "I May be home Soon after Some Long March", he responded, referencing one of the occasions when soldiers found it easiest to desert. But when it came to it, the impulses that prompted thoughts of desertion tended to be fleeting, and often faded as circumstances changed. Within a few days James had given up on the idea, and appears not to have contemplated it again through the remainder of his service.[67] Similar considerations likely led to the desertion of Robert Hanlon from the 42nd New York

[64] James Welsh to "Dear Mother" 18 January 1863, WC85074.
[65] Thomas Monaghan to "Dear Mother" 14 August 1863, WC52908.
[66] Carmichael, *Common Soldier*, 224-225.
[67] James Hand to "Dear father and Mother" 31 July 1863 and James Hand to "Dear Father And Mother And Brothers And Sisters" 9? August 1863, WC114954. NYMRA for James Hand, 164th New York Infantry, NYSA.

Infantry in September 1862; he disappeared from his unit just twelve days after his brother Edward had been killed in action with the 12th New York at Second Bull Run.[68] In both cases, it appears that the emotional and economic consequences of their families potentially losing a second son to the war contributed towards these men's decisions.

Before the first major battle of the war, and despite his own fervour for the fight, Patrick Coffey of the 69th New York State Militia advised an acquaintance "to remain at home for there are many here who are sorry for coming out who would not go back as they have taken the oath and it is the last thing in this world that they would want to do to break it".[69] The men Coffey spoke of had many parallels among Irish Americans during the war—regardless of whether or not they wanted to be there, the oath they had taken and the sense of duty they felt came with it meant they would stay the course. The majority did so even when they were faced with economic pressures from home, and even when the changing political situation caused many of them to question their service. Even the hot-headed would-be rowdy Samuel Boyd bucked expectations in this regard. When his distress concerning his failing relationship with his wife combined with his growing vitriol towards his officers, he wrote of his plan to abscond when he next received his pay. He intended to arrive home "Like a thief in the night", before leaving to head "farther up in the Contrey and get work".[70] It was a plan he never put into action.

There can be no denying that Irish Americans could and did abandon the colors for a wide variety of reasons; some because they were homesick, lonely or weary, some because of their lack of investment in the cause, some because of their disillusionment with the war's direction. Still more did so because they felt their personal circumstances

[68] NYMIRA for Robert Hanlon, 42nd New York Infantry, NYSA; WC88981.
[69] Patrick Coffey to "My dear Wife" 10 May 1861, WC19650.
[70] Samuel Boyd to "My Deare Ann" 2 December 1861, WC132926.

meant they could no longer afford to stay. On the whole, economics and home front conditions played a far more significant role in Irish American desertion rates during the Civil War than has previously been allowed. Their greater than average exposure to financial precarity made them significantly less capable than others of enduring obstacles such as erratic pay and economic fluctuations while continuing to maintain their familial responsibilities. Fundamentally, it was circumstances related to these men's class background—not their ethnicity—that were the most crucial in determining whether or not they decided to forsake the Union cause.

4.4 Nativism

Of the numerous factors that could negatively influence Irish American morale during the war—no doubt causing some to consider desertion—perhaps the most insidious and chronic was the nativist anti-immigrant and anti-Irish sentiment that was ever present before, during and after the Civil War. While some have argued that Irish American service prompted a tempering in anti-Irish attitudes, historian Susannah Ural has demonstrated that in reality their contribution had remarkably little impact on anti-Irish sentiment.[71] Publications such as *Harper's Weekly* and cartoonists such as Thomas Nast were continuing to portray the Irish in simian-form during the 1870s, while in the 1880s individuals such as noted emancipationist and suffragist Henry Ward Beecher still felt comfortable characterising the Irish as "the most admirable people that ever abominated the earth."[72] It is difficult to assess the degree to which this prejudice negatively impacted men in service, but the strength of bigotry on display in the antebellum and postbellum periods suggests it was a major issue. It has also left a

[71] Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 232.
[72] See e.g. *Harper's Weekly,* 2 September 1871; *New York Times*, 27 March 1882.

historical legacy, as it undoubtedly coloured reporting and analysis of Irish American service during and immediately after the war, influencing many of the contemporary military appraisals and statistics on which historians now rely.[73]

Between 1861 and 1865, the most readily apparent anti-Irish sentiment came on the home front, visible in the aftermath of incidents like the 1863 New York Draft Riots, and in the consistent targeting of the working-class Irish as war profiteers and members of the so-called "shoddy aristocracy".[74] Within the military, some nativist soldiers and sailors wrote openly of their disdain for their Irish American comrades. In sharing his reasons for an intense dislike of a fellow soldier, John Westervelt of the 1st New York Engineers noted that aside from being uneducated and ignorant he was "sloven in his dress and manners", "immoderately fond of whiskey" and "always bullying his fellows but when home is bullyed by his wife." "To sum it up", Westervelt explained, "he is every inch an irish man."[75] Casualised forms of denigration and discrimination were a fact of life for many in the army and navy, particularly those in mixed units. Though harder to identify, the type of low-level prejudice that must have been familiar to many is occasionally glimpsed in the post-war memoirs of non-ethnic servicemen. It was not unusual for Union veterans to write of Irish Americans in paternalistic and condescending tones—echoing the language often employed towards African Americans. An example can be seen in the recollections of the 20th Maine Infantry's

[73] See for example the comments of the Provost Marshal General James Barnet Fry quoted elsewhere in this thesis, which in turn impacted the statistics compiled by Benjamin Apthorp Gould. It also affected the recording of Irish Americans during the war, likely influencing decisions such as the commonplace activity of recording a man's place of residence rather than his place of birth on enlistment, see Apthorp Gould, *Investigations*, 15.

[74] On the wartime targeting of Irish immigrants perceived to have "violated the accepted rules of class, ethnicity, and gender" and who were characterised as the "shoddy aristocracy", see Gallman, *Defining Duty*, 91-122.

[75] Anita Palladino (ed), *Diary of a Yankee Engineer: The Civil War Story of John H. Westervelt, Engineer, 1st New York Volunteer Engineer Corps* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 204-205.

Theodore Gerrish when describing his former comrade Tommy Welch.[76] Though clearly fond of the Irish immigrant, an air of superiority permeates Gerrish's memories of Tommy's "most laughable blunders", his description of his slowness to obey commands, and his characterisation of his "bewildered, serio-comic gravity of expression for which the Emerald Isle is so noted".[77]

Such representations serve as a reminder that discriminatory attitudes towards Irish Americans did not always take the form of aggressive and overt nativism, or manifest themselves in wanton brutality towards the Irish American rank and file. They could also be pernicious, subtle and complex. Just how complex interactions between nativists and Irish Americans could be is evidenced by the case of Henry Livermore Abbott, an officer in the 20th Massachusetts Infantry. Although almost one in four of the men in his regiment were Irish-born, Abbott had no love for either the labouring classes or the Irish.[78] Abbott expressed the view that many New York and Pennsylvania units were filled with "half-clad savages", had described an ethnic officer as an "Irish pig" and offered that an Irish sergeant would have been ideal for promotion but for "his Irish characteristics".[79] Despite all this, Abbott also held the opinion that Irishmen could make very good soldiers with the proper discipline, noting in one letter how they and the English "suffer less" from their wounds than native-born Americans.[80] Perhaps

[76] Tommy Welch is also one of the correspondents examined as part of this thesis, and his letters are discussed in Chapter Five.

[77] Theodore Gerrish, *Army Life: A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War* (Portland: Hoyt, Fogg & Donham, 1882), 42-43.

[78] Richard F. Miller, "The Trouble with Brahmins: Class and Ethnic Tensions in Massachusetts' "Harvard Regiment", *New England Quarterly-A Historical Review Of New England Life And Letters* 76:1 (2003), 40. Abbott's attitude was one shared by many of the senior officers in the regiment. At one point the Colonel prevented mass attendance for fear that it would lead to whiskey drinking. See Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union*, 55.

[79] Foote, *Gentlemen and the Roughs*, 121; Henry Livermore Abbott, *Fallen Leaves: The Civil War Letters of Major Henry Livermore Abbott* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1991), 50; Miller, "The Trouble with Brahmins", 49. Abbott appears to have despised all foreigners. See Richard F. Miller, *Harvard's Civil War*, 320-321.

[80] Abbott, *Fallen Leaves*, 76.

more significantly, the bonds of shared service saw him develop a genuine affection for some of his Irish American charges. This is evident when he took up his pen to write to the families of those in his company who had died during the Fredericksburg street-fighting of 1862. He informed the immigrant mother of James Briody of the "great pang" that struck him when he saw her son lying dead, and how strongly he felt "the greatness of the loss".[81] To the sister of Cork native John Deasy he spoke of the Irishman's honesty and bravery, and his hope that "his orphan children will be properly cared for".[82] While Abbott never lost his feeling of superiority, or his broader nativist anti-Irish prejudice, the relationships he developed with his men likely moderated the degree to which he acted on them in uniform.

The types of direct military relationships that Irish Americans formed with officers like Abbott made it possible for them to serve in relative harmony under the majority of nativist and prejudiced leaders. Nevertheless, they walked a tightrope, and good relations were predicated on the acceptable performance of their duties. They could expect less leeway than others if they committed disciplinary infractions or played up to negative ethnic stereotypes. Despite such accommodations, when consistently applied the negative influence of constant, low-level prejudice undoubtedly had a corrosive effect on morale. Before the first major battle of the conflict it had already had a life-changing impact on Armagh native Patrick Carraher, who went to war with the 2nd New York State Militia. Patrick had elected to serve under the alias of "John Carrier", a name he apparently purposely selected because of its un-Irishness. Specifically, he was seeking to avoid the abbreviation of his name into what had by then become a ubiquitous ethnic epithet. This had been a coping mechanism he first developed in civilian life, as a relative later explained: "at the shop where he worked there was a

[81] Henry Livermore Abbott to "Mrs. Briody" 17 December 1862, WC9732.
[82] Henry Livermore Abbott [no salutation] 18 December 1862, WC11238.

large number of young men Americans and English who would keep calling him Pat and Paddee if he put his name in as Patrick, so he gave his name into the shop as John."[83] In an effort to limit the prejudice he faced, Patrick had adopted John as his professional name, carried it with him into the army, and died under it at First Bull Run. Patrick Kellegher had a similar tale to tell when explaining his service under the alias "John Kelly" in the Union navy. He apparently told friends that "he did not want to be called "Pat" while in the service by his comrades".[84] In this case it was a falsehood; the name change was almost certainly a result of him having deserted the 88th New York Infantry following his wounding at The Wilderness. Nevertheless, the offering up of the story demonstrates that it was sufficiently commonplace to be seen as a plausible argument.[85]

While the prejudice Irish Americans most commonly encountered was low-level, some had to deal with more extreme discrimination. Regardless of where or with whom they served, the rank and file always had to reckon with the power of their officers to enforce harsh disciplinary measures upon them. Whether anti-Irish prejudice played a role in the fate of the unfortunate Patrick Griffin outlined at the beginning of the chapter remains unknowable, but ethnic bigotry certainly increased the susceptibility of men like him to severe punishment. Sentences such as hanging by the thumbs and "bucking and gagging" were disproportionately handed out to immigrant soldiers by Union officers.[86] This increased vulnerability is something of which Irish Americans would have been keenly aware, particularly in non-ethnic units. Discipline became more harsh as attitudes towards Irish Americans in the military worsened from 1863 onwards,

[83] Affidavit of Francis Carahar 1 September 1868, WC124533.
[84] Affidavit of Margaret Hill and Eliza Kelly alias Eliza Keligher 23 November 1875, Navy WC2196.
[85] NYMRA for Patrick Kellegher, 88th New York Infantry, NYSA.
[86] Ramold, *Baring the Iron Hand*, 37.

driven largely by the influx of new immigrants into the army as substitutes and draftees, men who were seen as poor military material.[87] Many officers also regarded lower class and immigrant men as lacking the moral character and manly qualities required to make good soldiers.[88] If an Irish American was unlucky with his officer, pre-existing biases around class, religion or ethnicity could all grease the path towards censure and rebuke. In such circumstances, seemingly innocuous activities could cause friction. It was a clash of class and religious ideology that lay at the root of Irish sailor John Scanlan's ill-advised decision to damn his superior, an infraction which saw him clapped in double irons for a week. The reason for the dispute had been an order for him to "knock of sewing on Sunday", a day which Scanlan and his middle-class superior viewed in very different terms.[89]

In the Union military, prejudice was something that impacted Irish American officers as well as those in the ranks. Immigrants were less likely to be appointed officers in the first place, and if they became one, were less likely to advance through the officer corps.[90] Just as it did on the home front, these shared tribulations often served as a binding agent for those who shared ethnicity, no matter their social status. George D. Welles lumped the officers and men of the Irish 9th Massachusetts together in his disparaging account of the unit in 1862, claiming the officers were ignorant and vicious and the enlisted men drunkards in a confidential report to Governor Andrew.[91] Even those at the very top of Irish American military life were not immune. An April 1863

[87] Foote, *Gentlemen and the Roughs*, 128-131.
[88] Carmichael, *Common Soldier*, 83-84.
[89] John Scanlan to "My Dear Mother", no date [1863?], Navy WC18243.
[90] See Kevin J. Weddle, "Ethnic Discrimination in Minnesota Volunteer Regiments During the Civil War", *Civil War History* 35:3 (1989), 239-259. In some mixed units, while Irish Americans were accepted in the ranks, their presence among the officer corps was an entirely different matter. In 1861 a number of Irish officers were "purged" from the 6th Wisconsin Infantry by their fellows, some of them subsequently joining the ethnic 17th Wisconsin Infantry. See Beaudot and Herdegen (eds), *An Irishman in the Iron Brigade*, 34.
[91] Thomas H. O'Connor, *Civil War Boston: Home Front & Battlefield* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), 74.

letter from Captain William Maroney of the 164th New York Infantry to his brother apparently confirms claims that prejudice played a role in the infamous 1863 incident which saw General Michael Corcoran shoot Lieutenant-Colonel Edgar Kimball of the 9th New York Infantry for refusing to let him pass. According to Maroney, "the Gen toled the man who he was and what his buisness was and that he must go by but the man who was drunk toled him thad no damn Irish son of a bitch could pass him and drew a sword upon him the Gen drew his revelver and shot the man through the neck killing him almost instantly".[92]

For those serving in green flag formations like the 164th New York, perceptions of prejudice were heightened as a result of their status as the primary military representatives of Irish America. In the aftermath of the Battle of Fredericksburg, the refusal to grant the Irish Brigade permission to return to New York and refit resulted in allegations of nativism. Most seriously for the authorities, they were sentiments that appear to have been held among the rank and file and their families. Private William Dwyer, a 15-month Irish Brigade veteran, captured something of the mood when he wrote to tell his family that he would not, after all, be returning to New York. "we thought surely that our brigade was going home to new york that time but we were Kept back and would not be let Go in account of we being Irish".[93] A few days later, in response to news that his family had travelled to the docks in expectation of seeing him, he implied the Brigade was being used as cannon-fodder. "the will put us in to fight if their was only ten of us left in the Brigade all we have now is 250 men out of 3000 in

[92] William Maroney to "Dear James" 14 April 1863, WC87287. This description of events would be repeated in Corcoran's subsequent court-martial. See Phyllis Lane, "Colonel Michael Corcoran Fighting Irishman" in Pia Seija Seagrave (ed) *The History of the Irish Brigade: A Collection of Historical Essays* (Fredericksburg, Virginia: Sergeant Kirkland's Museum, 1997), 30.

[93] William Dwyer to "Dear Mother" 23 January 1863, WC103233.

the three old Regts".[94] The allegations that the Irish Brigade were being discriminated against have never been substantiated, but the perception was as damaging as any reality. The rumour that it was true spread into a working class Irish American community that was already over-represented among New York's rank and file, and which was being increasingly inundated with seemingly endless casualty notifications arriving from a multitude of different units. It added to a growing list of grievances that were gradually turning New York into a powder keg ready for the match.

Despite the prevalence of anti-Irish sentiment in the 1860s United States, Irish American servicemen tended not discuss the discrimination they faced in their personal correspondence. This may be partially due to the fact that they had become inured to it, but it seems that in many instances the development of shared experiences and a shared esprit-de-corps allowed an accommodation to be reached between men whose backgrounds and outlook on life were often wildly disparate. While this was rarely sufficient to remove all trace of anti-Irish prejudice, it did mitigate it substantially. That situation evolved as the war continued, when the draft riots and high Irish American representation within the late-war recruits brought an increase in discrimination, and with it a time of particular vulnerability for Irish Americans in service.

4.5 Race

Just as Irish Americans faced discrimination, they in turn discriminated against African Americans. Even in a racist society, Irish Americans were noted for the virulence of their antipathy towards blacks.[95] It was Frederick Douglass's assertion that this

[94] William Dwyer to "My Dear Mother" 26 January 1863, WC103233.

[95] A significant amount of scholarship has sought to address the causes that lay behind Irish American racism. For two of the most influential works, see Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* and Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*.

animosity derived from the Irish being "instantly taught when they step upon our soil to hate and despise the Negro."[96] Irish Americans were undoubtedly profoundly influenced by their exposure to the racist divisions in United States society. However, their correspondence and actions on the issue of race suggest that their racial attitudes were built on a foundational belief in white supremacy—something which they shared with almost all other white groups, and something most had in all likelihood brought with them from Ireland.

The most infamous Irish American interaction with race during the Civil War came in July 1863, when African Americans were specifically targeted during the New York City draft riots. The months leading up to the riots had witnessed the lowest ebb of morale at the front and at home yet seen in the war, a depression that—at least as far as Irish America was concerned—was further exacerbated by the coming into force of the Emancipation Proclamation. This was a measure which the majority of Irish Americans regarded as a fundamental alteration of the war's purpose, benefitting a group for whom they held little sympathy and who they regarded as a direct economic threat. *Harper's Weekly* had not been far wide of the mark with their August 1862 assessment that among Irish America's chief concerns was the fear that "the negro is to be exalted at the expense of the Irishman" a belief *Harper's* felt the Democratic Party were fomenting. In a piece entitled "A Word With Working Men", the journal assured anyone concerned about economic rivalry that emancipated people would not come North to compete with northern labourers, but would "stay where they were born, and where they prefer to live."[97] It was an argument that did not wash with the urban working class of places like New York. It was into this powder-keg that the match of the Enrollment Act was

[96] Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (Boston: De Wolfe & Fiske Co, 1892), 366.
[97] *Harper's Weekly,* 16 August 1862.

thrown. From the perspective of some of the New York Irish (and many other working-class New Yorkers), it was the final straw. They felt they had borne the brunt of the economic hardship of the war's early months, lost thousands to the service, and were now expected to sacrifice even more as wealthy natives continued to look on from the sidelines.[98] These grievances contributed—together with a multitude of other factors—towards the explosion of violence that erupted when the first effort to enforce the New York draft occurred in July 1863.[99]

The riots were dominated by Irish Americans and have come to be seen as a barometer of Irish America's views on the war.[100] Nevertheless, it remained the case that the great majority of the New York Irish chose not to participate in them. Irish Americans in service had little to say with respect to the violence, and—at least initially—they did not regard the riots as a distinctly ethnic event. Part of the reason for their silence was the timing of the riots, which came in the midst of hard campaigning on multiple fronts; they had other things on their minds, and fewer opportunities to write. For Irish New Yorkers, their primary concern was the safety of those at home. Having heard reports that "Col Nugent was Killed By the mob and his Place was Burned Down", William Martin was eager to know "how things are going on in Brooklyn I hope there will Be no harm done around your Neighbourhood".[101] John

[98] The impact that massive Irish American losses at the front had on morale on the Home Front has previously been highlighted by Susannah Ural. See Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 81.

[99] In the most influential book on the topic, Iver Bernstein sees the riots as much more than an outpouring of Irish American racism, but as the result of a complex mix of social, cultural and political factors that were impacting New York. See Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots*, 6.

[100] Just as the draft riots have come to be seen as the defining event of the war for Irish America, Mark A. Lause contends that they occupy a similar position for the working class more generally. He argues that the July 1863 events in New York City tend to represent "the only brief cameo of the white working class into Civil War history". See Lause, *Free Labor*, 69.

[101] William Martin to "My Dear mother" 25 July 1863, WC79466. Nugent was a senior officer in the 69th New York and the Irish Brigade, and would lead the latter towards war's end. The report he had been killed was incorrect, though his home had been ransacked due to his association with the draft as Acting Assistant Provost Marshal for the Southern District of New York.

McGillicuddy, on service in Louisiana, asked for a report on "how times are in New York" having heard "they were drafting in the city and had a great muss".[102] Within Irish American communities outside of New York, the riots occasioned even less comment.[103] While John Grimes of the 3rd Rhode Island Heavy Artillery had seen an "account of the Riot in New York in one of the papers" he offered no opinion on it. Instead his thoughts and concerns lay with Irish friends such as James Murphy, Charley McElroy and Arthur McSorley, whose names had been drawn in the Providence draft.[104]

Some Irish American servicemen expressed little sympathy for those who caused such unrest in their home communities. Though writing over a year after the riots, Cork-born Daniel Driscoll of USS *Metacomet* could just as easily have been referencing them when he commented that if the boys at home "wants to see shooting an smell pouder" they should come and fight for their country "instid of fighting Pollease officers".[105] For others, such turmoil was understandable given the direction of the war. When tensions concerning the draft and the perceived threat posed by African Americans exploded in Detroit in March 1863, John Scanlan of USS *Mystic* and veteran of the 2nd Michigan Infantry at Bull Run was a cheerleader of the racist violence that ensued. Writing from Hampton Roads, he expressed regret that the rioters "didnt burn every house where a nigger lives even if I was there old clarks would go shure I wouldnt care a pin for the shanties this side of it let them rip too".[106] Scanlan had little regard for African

[102] John McGillicuddy to "Dear wife" 27 July 1863, WC138484.
[103] Ryan Keating has demonstrated the markedly different ways in which the riots were viewed by both Irish and native communities outside New York. See Keating, *Shades of Green,* 133-149.
[104] John Grimes to "Dear Father & Mother" 5 August 1863, WC31685.
[105] Denis Driscoll to "Dear Father & Mothr" 30 October 1864, Navy WC2633.
[106] John J Scanlan to "Dear Sister" 21? March 1863, Navy WC18243. On the background and course of the Detroit attacks on African Americans, in which Irish Americans played a prominent role, see Paul Taylor, *"Old Slow Town": Detroit during the Civil War* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013), 78-118.

Americans, and held the view that the neighbourhood was being blighted by their presence. It was an outlook that many of his fellow Irish Americans shared.

Irish American prejudice and racism such as that exhibited by John Scanlan could be exacerbated by the tight-knit and insular nature of their communities, where those on the outside were often seen as "other". Thomas Hagan exemplified this attitude when writing home to discover his immigrant mother's new address in Troy, New York. He expressed his hope that she would "find a better place to live then a mong the dutch", as he felt that "thay are not very plesent folks to live beside".[107] While Thomas Hagan was clearly no fan of the Germans, when Irish American servicemen referenced others, invariably the people they were talking about were African Americans. Again and again, their words serve to demonstrate an unshakeable belief in their own racial superiority—the foundation upon which all their views and actions towards blacks were built.

Regardless of whether they had lived all or most of their lives in the United States or were relatively recent arrivals, the great majority of Irish American servicemen regarded black people, and particularly enslaved black people, as their inferiors. When Edward Carroll signed off a letter to his Co. Monaghan parents back in Rhode Island from Virginia in 1861, the last news he shared with them was of how the "nigers ar just like dogs they will Com when you wisel they will run after you like adog".[108] It is apparent that encountering the enslaved was something completely beyond these Irish Americans' experience, a novelty that was newsworthy for those at home.[109] While seated beneath a beech tree on the Virginia Peninsula in 1862, John Toomey from Co.

[107] Thomas Hagan to "Dear Mother" 27 November 1863, WC51663. "Dutch", derived from "Deutsch", was a term frequently employed during this period to reference those of German ethnicity.
[108] Edward Carroll to "Dear mother" 11 November 1861, WC63799.
[109] This was true for the majority of northern soldiers. See e.g. Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea,* 52.

Cork sought to capture something of the strangeness and exoticism of the enslaved. He wrote of the "half dozen niggers sitting behind me gambling and they are Swearing So that I cannot think of anything but they talk So funny once in A while one calling the other A damned black nigger."[110] Both Carroll and Toomey would have encountered free blacks in the North, but their accounts indicate there was little interaction between the two races. In addition to this, they appear to have subscribed to the commonly held view that Southern slavery had further degraded those subjected to it, placing the enslaved at the very bottom of their conceived racial hierarchy.[111]

Adding to the culture shock for Irish Americans was the lack of whites they found in the South, particularly women. John Sherry of the 7th Pennsylvania Reserves remarked of his post outside Washington D.C. that "there is No girls up heare but yellow Gals", and that they only saw white country girls when on picket.[112] John Sullivan of USS *Underwriter* had much the same impression of North Carolina, observing that "there are Not Much White Women in Newberne there are nearly all Niggers here".[113] Irish Americans held definite opinions on the appropriateness of forming any lasting inter-racial relationships with these women. In the wake of the Emancipation Proclamation it was apparently suggested to recent immigrant Michael Daly by his brother that he might secure a farm and marry an African American. He provided an unequivocal response: "about the farm and the niger wife the farm would do very well without the niger wife I go in to strong for my own colour give me one from the old sod".[114]

[110] John Toomey to "Dear Father" 20 May 1862, WC5388.
[111] The concept that slavery had degraded those subjected to it was widespread, even among abolitionists. See David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 250-267.
[112] John Sherry to "Dear Father & Mother" 21 August 1861, WC93096.
[113] John Sullivan to "Dear Mother", Navy WC2254.
[114] Michael Daly to "Dear Brother" 5 March 1863, WC143339.

As the number of blacks seeking freedom within Federal lines turned from a trickle to a flood, Irish Americans found themselves spending more and more time in their proximity. Increasing familiarity made encounters with the South's enslaved population less newsworthy, but some began to find their presence an annoyance, and grew suspicious of their motives. Reid Mitchell has argued that increased encounters with African Americans in the South did little to diminish the racism of northern whites, and in some cases led to its increase.[115] Such seems to have been the case among some Irish Americans. In June 1862 Edward Hanlin grumbled that "there is some of the awfulest looking niggers around here ever i seen we are Bothered with them the run away from their masters and Come to us for prot[ec]tion".[116] Landsman Owen McGowan of USS *Keystone State* thought these "contrabands" could not be trusted. Writing from South Carolina, the Roscommon native was nonplussed about their reliably in combat, commenting that some of the formerly enslaved men that General David Hunter had put into uniform "turned And fled or helped the south", though he admitted "These are the rumors here I can't say how true they are". Regardless, he felt that "The Federal goverment can Never do any thing while they Permit niggers to enter and Leave thair camps for they find Out every thing and go back and Tell thair masters".[117] Others expressed views that demonstrated both more complexity and more pragmatism. Writing a few weeks after the fall of New Orleans, George Doherty of USS *Horace Beals* managed to condemn both the city's creoles and slave owners in the same breadth. He informed his mother that it was a "pretty City" where the people were in some cases "Strong Union in Others as Strong Secesion as you can find", but noted that the latter were "of no account as they are mostly Créoles and Nigger Drivers they have not got mutch lip now for it would not do as Generall Butler has Soldiers posted all

[115] Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 121.
[116] Edward Hanlin to "Dear mother" 23 June [no year, but 1862], WC88981.
[117] Owen McGowan to "My Dear Brotherinlaw" 24 October [no date, 1862?], Navy WC2255.

Over the City where any feling is shown for Secesindom".[118] For his part, John Sullivan was pleased at the presence of black refugees at Fort Calhoun in Hampton Roads, telling his mother: "there is niggers who wash Our Clothes. we pay them five Cents a piece for every one they wash you Can fancy I am not much of a hand at washing."[119]

Yet even where Irish American opinions on enslaved African Americans were relatively neutral, their statements often betrayed feelings of superiority—echoing how they were themselves sometimes described by non-ethnic comrades. The way the enslaved tended to be treated by the military authorities did little to disabuse Irish Americans of the subservient status of those who had been held in bondage. While his regiment was on the march through Louisiana in 1863, John McGillicuddy recalled how "all the Niggers used to come Along with us we mak Solders of Aall the men and the famileys are sent to N.O. [New Orleans]".[120] In Virginia a year earlier, Patrick Kinnane and his comrades of Corcoran's Irish Legion had "drove all the niggers from here except those hired by the government They have been sent to the Craney Island they had to leave there homes and many of their things as they were drove at the point of the bayonet."[121] When pre-conceived conceptions were mixed with military callousness, some Irish Americans came to see blacks as little more than unthinking workhorses. Timothy Toomey appears to have been one who held that view, expressing his delight when he received a new assignment in Thibodaux, Louisiana, as he had "nothing to do but work niggers there is no white person on the place but the OverSeer and myself".[122]

Not all Irish American utterances on the subject of blacks were hostile, nor was every interaction negative. Charles Williams's exchanges with one elderly black woman in

[118] George Doherty to "Dear Mother" 15 June 1862, Navy WC2390.
[119] John Sullivan to "My Dear Mother" 8 December 1861, WC8731.
[120] John McGillicuddy to "Dear wife" 27 July 1863, WC138484.
[121] Patrick Kinnane to "Dear Sister" 27 [no month] 1862, WC75830.
[122] Timothy L. Toomey to "Dear Mother" 17 August 1863, WC46367.

Virginia demonstrates how cordial they could become. Having received a handsome new handkerchief from home, the Irish 69th Pennsylvania soldier related a story of their interaction over it: "an old Slave woman fell in love with it and she offered me 10 Dollars in Secesh money for it but i could not see it she said Before God she would she would have it but i don't think she will".[123] Middle-class Irish American John Lynch was one of the many officers who employed an African American servant. The Irish Brigade Captain found the boy "a great comfort…he is a very intelligent lad and what is a rare thing in Negros a Roman Catholic". Lynch valued his service so much that he promised he would take him back to New York with him.[124] The scale of Irish American involvement in the Union military ensured that there were many who enjoyed good relationships with African Americans, and welcomed an opportunity to play a role in ending slavery. Perhaps the most notable example in this regard was Patrick Guiney, Colonel of the Irish 9th Massachusetts Infantry, who held the view in 1861 that "slavery curses the land in which it is."[125] There was the occasional individual in the ranks who was of like mind; there was at least a proportion of Fenians in units like Corcoran's Irish Legion who were broadly supportive of emancipation as a war aim.[126] Unfortunately though, these men's position was the minority one.

The weeks that followed the implementation of the Emancipation Proclamation in early 1863 heralded the most vocal period of Irish American commentary on the question of African American freedom and service. Large numbers viewed the Proclamation as a fundamental change in the war's purpose and were vehemently

[123] Charles Williams to "Dear Sister" 24 September [no date, but 1863], WC69603. The exchange also demonstrates the economic activity that went on between the formerly enslaved and Irish American troops.
[124] John C. Lynch to "My Own darling Mother" [no date, but summer 1862], WC94532.
[125] Samito (ed), *Commanding Boston's Irish Ninth*, xxvi.
[126] Garcia, "The Forgotten Sixty-Ninth", 35-38. See also David Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America: The Politics of Exile, 1798-1998* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 101.

opposed to it.[127] "Who would'nt be a sodger to fight for Abolitionists" John Madden sarcastically mused from Baton Rouge that February. He was also seething at the temerity of the men of the new "nigger regiments", who had the "cheek to ask you if you have got a pass". His anger had reached a point where he now blamed African Americans for the war: "God damn the niggers the black buggars if it was not for them I would not be here."[128] When the Proclamation came into force Limerick immigrant (and former deserter) Dan Dillon and the men of the 10th Illinois Cavalry were growing embittered about a delay in their pay. "the cry is amongh the troops down here that if the dont pay us more regular…the will lay there arms down and let the damned abelinesets and nigers fight them selves and see what the Can do". Dillon was confident that in his regiment, "half of them wont fight to free negroes nor figh with them if ever the put a negro in the field with our armey every Black son of a Bich of them will get Killed".[129]

While Dan Dillion apparently left little room for ambiguity, as with all letters, his sentiments were of the moment. Despite his assertions he stood to his post, and within weeks was fighting alongside the black soldiers he had so recently been threatening to murder. At Milliken's Bend, their performance against his ultimate enemy—the Confederates—greatly impressed him: "the rebles ran agreat many of them [the African Brigade] into the river and drowned them but the negroes Killed 75 of them and made them run back as quick as the could go and the blacks fought like hell…we made them

[127] Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 81.
[128] John Madden to "Dear Mother" 16 February 1863, WC86549.
[129] Dan Dillon to "Dear mother" 19 February 1862 [sic. 1863], WC88094. When the Irish 90th Illinois Infantry were asked to offer three cheers for the policy to recruit African American soldiers, they refused. Reports disagreed as to whether they hissed or were largely silent, save for a few cries of "Never! Never!". See Swan, *Chicago's Irish* Legion, 59-63. At least one Union soldier charged that Irish troops in the 49th Pennsylvania were among those who fired on retreating African American USCT troops during the disastrous Battle of the Crater in July 1864. See Ramold, *Across the Divide*, 84.

run like cowerds and holer mercy and the got little of it from us and the negroes you may be sure".[130] As was the case with many of their non-ethnic comrades, actions like Milliken's Bend tempered the view of some Irish Americans on the question of black service. It did not necessarily diminish their racism, and it remained the case that very few ever embraced emancipation to the extent often credited to their peers in the wider Union military.[131] While some could never be reconciled with the Emancipation Proclamation, many—perhaps most—eventually accepted the sentiments of the fictitious Irish American soldier Miles O'Reilly, who advocated sharing "the right to be kilt" with African Americans.[132] By the spring of 1864, men like John Deegan had accepted that these black soldiers had a contribution to make. When news of the massacre of USCT troops at Fort Pillow reached his ears, he remarked: "if our fellows dont pay them [the Confederates] up for that I miss my guess."[133]

While there could be substantial variance and complexity in how Irish American servicemen viewed, interacted and responded to the issue of race, most of them cared little for the plight or fate of the enslaved. For that majority drawn from the urban working class, their own survival was of significantly more consequence to them than what they viewed as the high-minded ideals of anti-Irish abolitionists. Neither did these

[130] Dan Dillon to "Dear mother" 14 May 1863, WC88094.

[131] For the most important argument for Union soldiers' embrace of emancipation, see Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), also Chandra Manning, "A "Vexed Question": White Soldiers on Slavery and Race" in Sheehan-Dean (ed) *The View from the Ground*, 31-66. As Gary Gallagher notes, even those within the military who did eventually support emancipation chiefly did so "for what seem to be the wrong reasons", as they regarded it as a war-aim that would help ensure the preservation of the Union. See Gary W. Gallagher, *The Enduring Civil War: Reflections on the Great American Crisis* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2020), 113.

[132] Miles O'Reilly was the creation of Irish immigrant Charles Graham Halpine, who served during the war. Through his character he communicated the song "Sambo's Right to be Kilt" which put forth the argument that Irish Americans should accept black service as it reduced the risk to themselves. For lyrics see Charles Graham Halpine, *The Life and Adventures, Songs, Services and Speeches of Private Miles O'Reilly* (New York: Carleton, 1864), 55-56.

[133] John Deegan to "Sister Kate" 28 April 1864, WC68309.

men regard themselves as being engaged in a struggle to prove their racial "whiteness" to others.[134] They were extremely confident of their position in that hierarchy, and unstintingly believed in their racial superiority over African Americans. Although Frederick Douglass believed Irish American racism developed following arrival in the United States, analysis of the racial attitudes of these servicemen suggests that American conditions heightened a belief in white supremacy that had existed in many of these men before they left Ireland. The case of John O'Brien, one of Dan Dillon's comrades in the 10th Illinois Cavalry, is instructive in this regard. At Milliken's Bend in May 1863, O'Brien and a drunken comrade went on a rampage through the camp of the newly formed 1st Mississippi Volunteer Infantry (African Descent) and a nearby contraband settlement. Having first assaulted an African American soldier, they staggered on towards a shack, where they attempted to lead off a young girl with the intent of sexually assaulting her. As the girl's mother desperately held on to her child, one of the men—likely O'Brien—roared: "You damned niggers think you are free, and you are not as well off as you were with the Secesh! If you say a word I'll mash your damned mouth!". Almost too drunk to stand, the men turned on a young black boy and beat him to a pulp, destroying one of his eyes in the process. They next fixed their attention on one of the women, ripping off her clothes and attempting to rape her before she managed to escape. Help was eventually raised, but John O'Brien, who was regarded as the chief perpetrator, escaped any serious repercussions for his actions.[135]

[134] For an overview of such arguments, see Chapter One.

[135] David Henson Slay, "New Masters on the Mississippi: The United States Colored Troops of the Middle Mississippi Valley", (PhD: Texas Christian University, 2009), 73-76; Linda Barnickel, *Milliken's Bend: A Civil War Battle in History and Memory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 71-72; Linda Barnickel "10th Illinois Cavalry at War with Isaac Shepard" (2013), *Milliken's Bend: A Civil War Battle in History and Memory*, http://millikensbend.com/10th_illinois_cavalry_at_war_with_isaac_shepard/, accessed 1 February 2016.

John O'Brien served through the war and went on to live a long life. The concept that his racism was learned behaviour in America are challenged by his backstory. His pension file reveals that he had only emigrated from East Cork in May 1859, when he was 20-years-old. After a few months in New York, he spent a short time labouring in Richmond, Virginia and Cairo, Illinois before finally moving to Grenada, Mississippi. Following Mississippi's secession he returned to Illinois, where he enlisted in 1861.[136] There can be little doubt that John O'Brien's shocking attitude towards African Americans was heavily informed by his time in the South (and southern Illinois). Nevertheless, the extremity of his behaviour and the fact that he was a recent, adult arrival in America make it unlikely that he had landed in the United States as a racial blank slate. Rather it seems far more probable that he had been confirmed in his views of white superiority before his departure from Cork, with all he encountered subsequently serving to heighten the self-perceptions of racial superiority and racial entitlement that allowed him to feel entitled to commit such an abhorrent assault.

As the case of John O'Brien and the writings of many of his comrades suggest, the paradigm for almost all Irish Americans was a fundamental, unshakable belief in their white supremacy, something that many had brought with them to their new home. When these convictions coalesced with their vulnerable financial position in the United States and the indignity of a perceived economic challenge from people they viewed as inferior, the perfect breeding ground for intense racism was created. There were very

[136]Affidavit of John O'Brien 17 July 1883, SC266425, NARA; Illinois, Databases of Illinois Veterans, Index, 1775-1995, Ancestry; Special Schedule of the Eleventh Census, 1890, Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans of the Civil War, NARA; For more detail and analysis on the case of John O'Brien see Damian Shiels, ""The Blacks Fought Like Hell": Racism & Racist Violence in the Words & Actions of Two Union Irish Cavalrymen", *Irish in the American Civil War*, (2016), https://irishamericancivilwar.com/2016/02/05/the-blacks-fought-like-hell-exploring-racism-racist-violence-through-the-words-actions-of-two-union-irish-cavalrymen/, accessed 6 June 2020.

few active supporters of emancipation in Irish American ranks, although it seems probable that many Irish had—or developed—relatively neutral views with respect to the blacks they encountered in bondage and in uniform. But many others held fast to their entrenched opinions, and through the course of the war saw African Americans as an inferior people who posed a threat both to the future of the United States and their own stability and advancement in American society.

4.6 Irish American Politics

While white supremacy and the threat of direct economic competition with blacks fuelled the racist position adopted by many Irish American servicemen, how they interacted with American politics also had a role to play. The support for the Democratic Party among the Irish in Union blue was all but universal.[137] As detailed in Chapter One, this devotion was entirely understandable. Aside from having taken numerous former Know Nothings into the fold, the Republican Party was perceived by many Irish Americans as both anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic. In contrast, the Democrats had welcomed the potential of the Irish vote, offering a degree of political power and influence that the Irish had long been denied. The conservative outlook of the Democrats with respect to the constitution also appealed to Irish Americans eager to maintain the integrity of a Republic that they and many others viewed as both essential

[137] Not a single letter examined within the corpus expressed support for the Republicans. For a background to how the Democrats had cultivated Irish American support, see e.g. Bridges, *A City in the Republic*. For an overview of some of the major works on the Democratic position during the Civil War, see Thomas E. Rodgers, "Copperheads or a Respectable Minority: Current Approaches to the Study of Civil War-Era Democrats", *Indiana Magazine of History*, 109:2 (June 2013), 114-146. For the principal work of history on the Democratic Party during the period of the conflict, see Joel H. Silbey, *The Democratic Party in the Civil War Era: 1860-1868* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977).

and exceptional.[138] While the Democratic affiliation of Irish Americans in uniform was seen as unremarkable early in the war, it became increasingly problematic as the conflict dragged on, particularly in the aftermath of the Emancipation Proclamation. Democrats who opposed government policy or were too vocal in their opinions were often painted as less loyal and less dedicated to Union victory than those who wholeheartedly supported Abraham Lincoln's administration. This was a perception that became crystallised in the minds of many in the United States following the 1865 assassination of Abraham Lincoln.[139] As such a readily identifiable block of Democratic supporters, that event proved particularly detrimental to Irish Americans.

William McIntyre, who was an apprentice printer before his enlistment in the 95th Pennsylvania Infantry, was one such ardent Irish American Democrat. He also fancied himself a political analyst. Following the Emancipation Proclamation, William expressed his views on the political situation to his immigrant parents. "I think the Radicals of the Northeast want this Gov't broken up and they think by so doing they will get the Middle States with them but they are mistaken Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey will never take up with such a set of hypocrites and defamers of a country's Rights as the Abolition Party are." His own analysis of the "Question at Issue"—i.e. emancipation—was solidly in line with the Democrat position. "If a State has laws they ought to be respected and there is no Institution in any State that ought to be interfered with unless it is the wish of the majority of the inhabitants of that state".[140] While

[138] Ryan Keating has pointed out how "democracy, republicanism, and citizenship were vital components of public rhetoric surrounding Irish service and the continued support of the Irish Americans at home." Keating, *Shades of Green*, 155.

[139] For the best discussion of the negative consequences adherence to the Democratic Party had for Irish Americans in mainstream American perception see Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 190-232, 263-264. For an analysis of American Civil War soldiers' letters from a political perspective, which revealed the importance that political conviction could have for these men, see Joseph Allan Frank, *With Ballot and Bayonet: The Political Socialization of American Civil War Soldiers* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998).

[140] William McIntyre to "Dear Father & Mother" 30 January 1862 [sic. 1863], WC45770.

William McIntyre offered one of the most erudite explanations of his Democratic principles, his was one voice among many. James Welsh's concerns, expressed at the same time, were blunter and more succinct, but also more personal. January 1863 found him despairing at the actions of one of the women at home, who he hoped would "not be so foolish as to mary a Abe Lincoln Abolinsionist for I think it is the ruin of the country".[141]

In the war's early years, most Democratic Irish in mixed formations were able to engage openly with their political beliefs. During the 1862 New York elections, Irish immigrant Michael Higgins wrote from Camp Douglas, Illinois to discover who had been elected from his home in Troy. "I hear that the Democrats carried the day bully for them if they did". For his own part, he had "quite an amuseing time" acting as one of the "inspecters of Election" for his company of the 125th New York Infantry as they voted on who should be Governor of New York, a contest in which "The Republicans beat us by 9 majority".[142] In formations like the 125th New York, Higgins and his fellow Democratic Irish Americans had been able to serve successfully in a unit that contained opposing political perspectives. This was something that would become progressively more difficult for them from 1863 onwards, when the military began to discipline Democrats who were seen to be speaking against either emancipation or the administration.[143] By the time William McIntyre was sharing his thoughts on the topic, he was aware that expressing such sentiments was dangerous, even in private

[141] James Welsh to "Dear Mother" 13 January 1863, WC85074.

[142] Michael Higgins to "Dear Mother" 10 November 1862, WC26768. The 125th New York were in Illinois in the aftermath of their capture at Harper's Ferry, an incident that saw their brigade branded the "Harper's Ferry Cowards".

[143] On the harsh policies initiated in the military to crack down on those expressing anti-emancipation views, something which caused Democrats to be more circumspect about sharing their opinions, see White, *Emancipation,* 38-68. For a discussion of the party political partisanship that grew more marked as the war progressed see Mark E. Neely, *The Union Divided: Party Conflict in the Civil War North* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002) and especially Adam I.P. Smith, *No Party Now: Politics in the Civil War North* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

correspondence. "I have let myself too loose now…" he confessed.[144] Theodore Lyman, who served on the staff of George Meade, highlighted the differing perceptions of how Republicans and Democrats were handled during the late war period with reference to two Irish American officers who supported opposing candidates in the 1864 Presidential election. Lyman observed that while Cork native and Republican Charles Henry Tucker Collis "sent letters and despatches…about the enthusiasm for Lincoln in the army…Nothing is said to him" but Martin McMahon "a McClellan man" who "talks very openly and strongly about his side…is, without warning, mustered out of the service!"[145] After 1863 many Irish Americans—both officers and men—took the hint, and became more circumspect about discussing their political affiliation.

Irish American Democrats in the Union military were undoubtedly impacted by the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862, and some were among those who abandoned the cause as a result.[146] However, the extent to which this was the case is overstated. The Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation occurred during one of the two major wartime waves of Irish American recruitment in the autumn of 1862 (see Chapter Two), and many even enlisted after Lincoln's announcement. Michael Corcoran's newly formed Irish Legion did not leave New York state for the front until early November. These late 1862 Irish American recruits did not turn on their heels the moment they had signed up. Like the great majority, they stuck to their task, even if it was only until the expiration of their term of service. Those that remained confined talk of politics to those they felt able to trust. James Welsh, so horrified at the

[144] William McIntyre to "Dear Father & Mother" 30 January 1862 [sic. 1863], WC45770.
[145] George R. Agassiz (ed) *Meade's Headquarters, 1863–1865: Letters of Colonel Theodore Lyman from the Wilderness to Appomattox*, (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1922), 247-248.
[146] For a detailed discussion of negative Irish American reactions to the Emancipation Proclamation and morale at this period see Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 136-189. For the perspective of the wider Union army, see Gallagher, *The Union War*, 75-118.

potential marriage of his female acquaintance to a Republican, contemplated desertion in January 1863 but chose to stay, and ultimately re-enlisted as a veteran volunteer. Such commitment was not uncommon among Democratic Irish American servicemen, even with those who took issue with the Emancipation Proclamation. John O'Brien, the Cork immigrant who had so horrifically attacked and sexually assaulted African American women and children, likewise stayed to re-enlist in 1864. His commitment to the Union seems to have been steadfast, given he had left the South following secession and had enlisted in the first summer of the war.[147] Another who stayed the course and who had re-enlisted was former labourer Patrick McCaffrey. As the 1864 Presidential election loomed, the Irish Brigade soldier was lying wounded in Washington D.C.'s Lincoln Hospital. Furloughs were on offer for those who would go home to vote, but "they must promise to vote for lincln Be fore the Leave here". This widespread practice of granting leave to those who would declare their intent to vote Republican failed to tempt McCaffrey, despite the possibility that he would never get another chance to see home again. He stubbornly insisted it was something "Which I wont do if They never Give me a furlough".[148] Though he and the others remained, their personal political convictions had not changed. They had found a way to remain both committed Democrats and committed Union soldiers.

The 1864 Presidential election in which McCaffrey was denied his franchise marked another upsurge in political discourse among Irish American troops. For those moved to comment on it, there was no mistaking where their allegiances lay. Writing from aboard USS *Cyane* at Acapulco that August, Dubliner Thomas Hynes sarcastically pondered "if

[147] Affidavit of John O'Brien 17 July 1883, SC266425, NARA; Illinois, Databases of Illinois Veterans, Index, 1775-1995, ancestry.com; Special Schedule of the Eleventh Census, 1890, Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans of the Civil War, NARA.

[148] Patrick McCaffrey to "Dear Margret" 2 September 1864, WC96706. On the practice of allowing men home to vote if they were Republican, see White, *Emancipation*, 24, 32.

Old Abe will be reelected or will some other unknown broken down Lawyer take his place".[149] Charles Traynor, another veteran volunteer and member of the Irish Brigade, predicted on 1 November that the election would be a "hard Contest" but earnestly hoped "Little M^{c} will be the Man".[150] The Democratic allegiance of Irish American servicemen was interwoven with a near adulation of "Little Mac"—George B. McClellan—particularly among those of the Army of the Potomac. This had begun early in the war, when Little Mac's reputation as a General who cared deeply for his men was reinforced by his personal magnetism. An awestruck Edward Hanlin captured something of the General's appeal when he described a June 1862 encounter with his hero:

> General mc Clelland is one of the finest men i ever seen he is a real gentleman he does not put on one half of the airs that our Captain Does one Day last week he rode out to where we was on picket and he Came over to me and asked me to hold his horse and when he Came Back again thank you he says just as if i had Done some favour for him[151]

Writing to his family on patriotic paper that bore the image of McClellan shortly after the General had taken command in 1861, Francis Cullen informed them that "the picture on this papper is the man that Leads us to victory or death for he will counqure or die he good and to his men and Likes to See them in good health".[152] McClellan proved particularly adept at endearing himself to his Irish American men. When Abraham Lincoln visited the Army of the Potomac's Harrison's Landing camp in July 1862, the Irish Brigade gave the President "three Cheers" as he passed through. John Dougherty recalled that afterwards "Genl mcClellan said boys give 3 more for the old green flag which was given in a style that must have astonished old Abe."[153] News of

[149] Thomas Hynes to "My Dear Wife" 28 August 1864, Navy WC4104.
[150] Charles Traynor to "My Dear Mother" 1 November 1864, WC88894.
[151] Edward Hanlin to "Dear mother" 23 June [no year, but 1862], WC88981.
[152] Francis Cullen to "Deare mother" 17 September 1861, WC134902.
[153] John Dougherty to "Dear Mother" 19 July 1862, WC93207. For an analysis of George McClellan's time in command that seeks to understand his political and social perspective see

such public acknowledgement would have spread quickly throughout ethnic circles both at the front and at home.

Following McClellan's final removal from command in November 1862, John Sheehan spoke for many Irish Americans when he declared it would "be A happy day to the Army when he takes the command again Black abolitionsts make a great nois about McClellan but let them go out to the Army and hear what the soldiers say if they could have their say little mack would have command tomorrow".[154] The New York *Irish American* captured the mood at his departure, feeling it was "likely to prove more serious in its results than even his [Lincoln's] emancipation Proclamation".[155] With a keen eye to his future, following his dismissal McClellan was careful to maintain and cultivate his popularity among Irish Americans. One example came in his attendance at an April 1863 fundraiser in New York for the relief of the poor of Ireland, a cause towards which many in uniform contributed. During his remarks, McClellan spoke of his sympathy for the relief efforts, of his feelings that he had "sprung…from a kindred race" and how in service he had "ever found the Irish heart warm and true."[156] It was a regard that many of his now veteran former charges reciprocated.

Much of this early war enthusiasm was maintained into McClellan's 1864 run for the Presidency, with ethnic newspapers such as the *Irish American* and *Pilot* championing the Democratic ticket.[157] A large number of Irish American servicemen—men like Charles Traynor—shared those papers' sentiments and joined the *c.* 20 percent of army

Ethan S. Rafuse, *McClellan's War: The Failure of Moderation in the Struggle for the Union* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

[154] John Sheehan to "Dear Father" 18 March 1863, WC93487.

[155] *New York Irish American*, 15 November 1862.

[156] *New York Irish American*, 9 April 1863.

[157] *New York Irish American,* 5 November 1864; Francis R Walsh, "The Boston Pilot Reports the Civil War", *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 9:2 (1981), 12.

voters in the field who cast their ballot for Little Mac.[158] Indeed, they appear to have been among the staunchest and most resolute of Democratic voters during that election, with many of the most heavily Irish units bucking what was an otherwise convincing Lincoln victory among Union troops.[159] Of the handful of Pennsylvania regiments that voted for McClellan, the Irish 69th Pennsylvania did so most overwhelmingly, with 95 percent going Democrat. In the West, almost 80 percent of the green flag 17th Wisconsin did likewise. Unsurprisingly, the New York units whose state troops contained the highest number of Irish Americans also provided Little Mac with the greatest support. The surviving figures show that in the old Irish Brigade regiments, over 91 percent of the 63rd New York and 100 percent of the 88th New York voted for him. The 116th Pennsylvania, always the least ethnic of the Irish Brigade regiments, gave 58 votes to the Democrats, and 54 to Lincoln.[160]

The men who gave their votes to McClellan did so with a conviction that they were being true to the Union and the constitution.[161] But there were undoubtedly others who chose not to do so. As Jonathan White has identified, by late 1864 many serving Democrats—particularly veterans—had become disillusioned by the actions of their party during the war. The leadership had opposed the serving man's franchise, and went to the polls in 1864 with a Peace Democrat on the ticket in the shape of Vice-

[158] White, *Emancipation*, 1. By 1864, nineteen northern states had brought in legislation that allowed soldiers to vote in the field, among those who could not were Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. See White, *Emancipation*, 23; Glatthaar, *March to the Sea*, 49.

[159] Of 164 surviving regimental voting returns, 130 gave majorities to Lincoln. see Fry, *Republic in the Ranks*, 178-180.

[160] For the available figures of how the Army of the Potomac regiments voted, see Fry, *Republic in the Ranks*, 210-225. For the available figures from Sherman's army, see Glatthaar, *March to the Sea*, 200-202.

[161] Although the Copperhead and peace-wing factions within the Democratic Party tend to be highlighted, many Democrats maintained a position of loyal opposition to the administration during the conflict. On this see Mark E. Neely Jr., *Lincoln and the Democrats: The Politics of Opposition in the Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Presidential candidate George H. Pendleton.[162] Any attractions the peace wing may have held were further undermined by the major Union military successes that arrived just as the election approached. As a result, some Irish American veterans opposed both candidates. James O'Neill of the 4th Delaware Infantry disliked Lincoln because he wanted the war to continue until "slavery is abolished", and McClellan because he "totely aposed the Interest of the Soldier".[163] In all probability, Democratic support in 1864 was likely weaker among the Irish American veterans of 1861 and 1862 than it was with their ethnic fellows who had come to the conflict from late 1863 onwards. By then, the former's substantial physical and emotional investment in the conflict would have led many who had "re-upped" to become committed war democrats, sharing in their comrades' determination to see the conflict through and reticent to support a platform that, although it had their idol at their head, had been compromised by the Copperheads.[164] McClellan's support would have been further suppressed by the fact that many Irish Americans were serving in units in which they were a minority, particularly outside of New York. In such circumstances the public nature of the vote must have dissuaded some from casting their ballot, particularly if in doing so they ran the risk of evoking the wrath of their comrades, or worse still, their officers. There were undoubtedly numerous Irish Americans among the *c.* 20 percent of eligible serving soldiers in the field who chose not to vote at all.[165] Regardless of their degree of

[162] White notes that by this point the activities of the peace wing had caused most Democratic soldiers "to doubt their party's loyalty" with some showing no confidence in either party. See White, *Emancipation*, 116.

[163] James O'Neill to "Mother and Father" 12 October 1864, in "Letters from Sergeant James O'Neill, 4th Delaware Volunteers, Army of the Potomac, 1863-1865", Petersburg National Battlefield, Five Forks Unit, Delaware Folder, Petersburg, VA. Cited in "The 1864 Election - a View from the Trenches" National Park Service, Petersburg National Battlefield, https://www.nps.gov/pete/learn/historyculture/the-1864-election.htm#_ftn8, accessed 18 September 2019.

[164] For a history of the Copperhead movement, see Jennifer L. Weber, *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[165] For this figure see White, *Emancipation*, 112.

disillusionment with the Democratic ticket, the numbers who actually "lent" their vote to Lincoln were probably small. Some may have been won over (or intimidated) into voting for Lincoln through the arguments advanced by their immediate superiors, something that Zachery Fry has identified as being particularly prominent in the Army of the Potomac.[166] However, any such efforts would not have been aided by what one historian has described as the "virulent anti-Irish animus" that was displayed by Abraham Lincoln's Union Party base in 1864.[167]

Irish American servicemen were overwhelmingly Democratic during the conflict, but like most of their fellow party supporters, the majority saw themselves as every bit as loyal and committed to the cause of the United States as any Republican.[168] They were, after all, putting their lives on the line to protect and preserve the Union. Within the Democratic tent, Irish Americans ran the gamut of political engagement, and circumstance and experience dictated the level of their commitment to placing a Democratic President in the White House in 1864. If newspapers reveal something of the opinions of their readers, then perhaps the dominant political view of Irish American servicemen is to be found within their paper of choice—the New York *Herald*, which by conflict's end was the leading daily newspaper in the United States. Politically, the paper had opposed Lincoln's election in 1860 and had initially called for compromise with the South. While it supported the war after Fort Sumter, it consistently maintained its disdain for Abolitionist Republicans, opposing both the Emancipation Proclamation

[166] Fry, *A Republic in the Ranks*, 1. Among the most notable Irish Americans to express support Lincoln's re-election were Thomas Francis Meagher and Colonel Patrick Guiney of the 9th Massachusetts Infantry—it did neither man any favours within the Irish American community.

[167] Smith, *No Party Now*, 147.

[168] As Keith Altavilla puts it with reference to the 1864 Presidential election, "Union soldiers who supported McClellan did so because they thought his election was the best path to winning the war and because of their long-standing loyalty to the party through traditional ideological and ethnic ties." See Keith Altavilla, "McClellan's Men: Union Army Democrats in 1864" in Andrew S. Bledsoe and Andrew F. Lang (eds) *Upon the Field of Battle: Essays on the Military History of America's Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2018), 228.

and, ultimately, Lincoln's re-election. Despite the fact that the newspaper shared the Irish adulation of George B. McClellan, by 1864 its gaze had shifted onto Ulysses S. Grant, whom it advocated for the Presidency. By the time the election came around, they had moved from a lukewarm support of McClellan's candidacy to a position of neutrality, largely due to the *Herald's* contempt for Copperheads.[169]

The assassination and martyrdom of Lincoln and Democratic opposition to emancipation have caused the Irish American wartime political stance to be increasingly marooned on the "wrong side of history" in popular perception. But an exploration of the reality of their lives and the society in which they lived makes their position, and even the virulent racism they all too often practiced, entirely comprehensible. The Republican Party, with its anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic component, were not their friends. Neither were "radical" abolitionists, many of whom were similarly anti-Catholic and anti-Irish. To the modern eye, there is an irony in the fact that a group of people that were so discriminated against could in turn exhibit such racism towards another even more downtrodden people. But as one of the poorest sections of northern society whose lives were often lived on the margins, they perceived themselves as having the most to lose through the emancipation of enslaved African Americans, people who—like almost all whites of the day—they regarded as their inferiors in almost every respect. Most Irish American men carried these views with them into uniform, and many maintained them throughout the conflict. Others mitigated their outlook on the issues of race, emancipation and even politics as the war progressed, albeit in a much less dramatic or profound way than other Union servicemen; they rarely went so far as to become advocates of either emancipation or Republicans.

[169] Crouthamel, *Bennett's New York Herald*, 112-151. The *Herald* had also defended the New York Irish when they were blamed for the Draft Riots.

All through their service these men continued to face the discrimination that they had endured in civilian life. It was often born of pre-conceptions about their class, their cultural norms, their character and their commitment, but the stereotypical extremes rarely matched the reality. They were less wild, less violent, and less drunk—in essence less different—than they were often given credit for. Although many undoubtedly suffered increased hardship and violence at the hands of their officers due to such discrimination, most were able to carefully navigate their way through their military experience. Those in mixed units were greatly aided in this by the growing esprit-de-corps and unit pride that began to bond men together as the fighting progressed, and which served to mitigate some of the impulses of more nativist officers. In the end, despite the prejudice they faced, their political opposition to the administration, and their enmity towards African Americans, the number of Irish Americans in Federal uniform remained remarkably high throughout the four years of war. Given all these impediments, it begs the question—why did a quarter of a million of them choose to serve? The answer to that all-important question lies in an analysis of how these men identified themselves, and the factors that motivated them to enlist.

Chapter Five

Who they Were, Why they Fought: Identity & Motivations

John White's American journey began in the aftermath of his father's death during the Great Famine. In the wake of that loss, his mother took the decision to remove her young family across the Atlantic, and it was the United States where John grew to manhood. As the years passed, he came to think of America and especially the Massachusetts mill town of Easthampton as home. Fifteen-years-old when the war came, John looked on as some of the local men went off to the front, helping to fill the ranks of regiments like the 27th Massachusetts Infantry. His turn came in August 1863, when he mustered into service in Company C of the 2nd Massachusetts Heavy Artillery, and shipped out for North Carolina.[1]

John White held a deep and genuine affection for the labouring community around Nashawannuck Mills, where he and his family worked producing buttons.[2] He inquired after the welfare of both the "button shop boys and girls" and that of his employer, Hiram J. Bly. Perhaps this sense of place fostered in him a patriotism that led to his declaration that "if i be shot i will die in a good cause" and his hope—likely of doubtful comfort to his mother—that "you may be shure i will kill a few rebs before i go if i be spared".[3] Perhaps he sought to confirm his manhood, and to demonstrate his superiority to those—such as that "brave fellow" Charlie Smith—who preferred to "blow…about what he can do" but who ultimately would "rather stay at home with the girls". In

[1] Affidavit of Robert Ramsey 21 January 1865, WC64111; CMSR of John White, Company C, 2nd Massachusetts Heavy Artillery, NARA; Payson W. Lyman, *History of Easthampton: Its Settlement and Growth: Its Material, Educational and Religious Interests, Together with a Genealogical Record of its Original Families* (Northampton: Trumbull & Gere, 1866), 112-113.
[2] Affidavit of George S. Clark and Hiram J. Bly 20 January 1865, WC64111; 1860 U.S. Census, Easthampton, Hampshire, Massachusetts.
[3] John White to "Dear mother" 8 December 1863, WC64111.

uniform, John could look forward to a triumphant return, when Charlie would be forced to "hang his head the coward".[4] Perhaps John's motivations came down to money. The $13 a month he earned in the factory was exactly what he could expect in the army, but as everyone knew, in actuality there was much more on offer.[5] That figure was boosted by allowances and bonuses, such as the town, state and federal bounties that by late 1863 were becoming increasingly attractive. During the course of the war, John's Easthampton home, which furnished some 200 men for service, spent $40,000 on bounties.[6] Surely it was no coincidence that one of John's first pronouncements to his mother after enlisting was his desire for her to "build a house", promising he would send "all i can to help you along with it", for "i want a house that we can call our own when i go home so you might as well go about it as quick as you can".[7]

Why did Irish immigrants like John White enlist? In John's case, any one of the above quotes—or none—may have represented his primary reason for joining up.[8] Each individual's decision was shaped by a complex melting pot of influences, where factors such as timing, life-experience, opportunity, misfortune and circumstance competed and comingled with intangibles like identity, ideology and patriotism to create a uniquely personal set of motivations. Those most frequently ascribed to Irish Americans include gaining military experience for a future revolution in Ireland, a desire to dispel negative stereotypes surrounding the Irish in the United States, the need for steady employment, and a desire to preserve the Union—not least so it could continue its role as a refuge for Irish emigrants.[9] This chapter uses the contextualised correspondence to unpick these

[4] John White to "Dear Mother" 14 September 1863, WC64111.
[5] Affidavit of George S. Clark and Hiram J. Bly 20 January 1865, WC64111.
[6] Lyman, *History of Easthampton*, 124.
[7] John White to "Dear Mother" 14 September 1863, WC64111.
[8] This in itself demonstrates how selective quotation from Civil War letters must be treated with caution, particularly with respect to uncontextualised correspondence.
[9] See e.g. Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 54; Keating, *Shades of Green*, 19.

motivations, identify the major factors that drove enlistment, and challenge the relative importance that have historically been placed on others. But discerning that importance first requires an analysis of how these soldiers and sailors viewed themselves, viewed Ireland, and viewed the United States. Coming to grips with these aspects of identity are integral to understanding how they perceived their military service, enabling in turn a fuller comprehension of why so many enlisted.[10] Heretofore, scholars of the Irish American soldier have recognised in them often distinct and sometimes competing Irish and American identities, something Susannah Ural has termed "dual loyalties".[11] An assessment of how these "Irish" and "American" identities manifested and interacted in the common Irish soldier and sailor reveals a new perspective. While Irish ethnic and cultural identity were of central importance to the majority, by the time of the Civil War that Irishness was something that many servicemen perceived as a core component of a distinctly American identity—not something that competed with it. It was this hybrid identity that many of them carried into uniform, and it is one of the major reasons behind why they fought.

5.1 "Irish" Identity in Uniform

Traditional perceptions of Irish American identity during the conflict revolve almost exclusively around their "Irishness", conjuring images of the green flags and boxwood-

[10] Peter Carmichael has characterised identity as a "soft analytical category", noting that "too often historians invest ideology and identity with an all-encompassing explanatory power" creating an impression that soldiers acted in reflexive ways to things like the nationalism and duty. See Carmichael, *Common Soldier*, 236, 10. While this needs to be acknowledged and recognised, tackling the issue of identity is nevertheless fundamental to gaining a fuller understanding of the Irish American experience of the Civil War.

[11] See Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 52-53-54, 60. Ryan Keating has used the term "dual patriotism", see Keating, *Shades of Green*, 43. While Susannah Ural sees the Irish portion of these men's identity as dominant, and increasingly so as the war went on, Ryan Keating argues that they also strongly identified with the ideals and opportunities offered by their American home. See e.g. Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 52, 54, 134-135; Keating, *Shades of Green*, 19, 25, 110-111.

adorned caps of the Irish Brigade. This Irishness was intrinsic, but its visage has served to overwhelm all other facets of how these men perceived themselves. In reality, it was but one element of their personal, public and cultural identities, which were significantly more nuanced and complicated than has previously been understood—and which varied dependent on both background and circumstance.

During the American Civil War, the best-known and most public celebration of Irish American identity came on St. Patrick's Day. For those in ethnic units, their patron saint's feast presented the chance to boost esprit-de-corps and to loudly trumpet Irish American cultural identity and Irish America's contribution to the war effort. Nothing surpassed the 1863 efforts of the Irish Brigade in this regard, with their legendary celebrations amounting to a public-relations blitz on the Army of the Potomac. Irish American communities at home also used the day to highlight their contribution to the war effort, such as the major St. Patrick's Day event held in Philadelphia in 1864 to mark the return of the 69th Pennsylvania Infantry.[12] Like the Irish Brigade and the 69th Pennsylvania, the great majority of green flag regiments sought to make the day their own. David O'Keeffe, a former cabinet-maker from Co. Cork, recalled St. Patrick's Day 1863 in the Irish 9th Massachusetts Infantry as "quite a merry time", where officers and privates exchanged roles, a furlough was placed atop a greased pole, horse races were run and a band entertained everyone with music.[13] A year later, fellow Corkman James Healy of the same regiment spoke of the "grand time" the men had, with "Horse races and match game of football hurdle sack races burlesque dress parade & c."[14] Nevertheless, for the majority of Irish Americans in mixed formations, where St. Patrick's Day was not an occasion of significance for their unit's identity, celebrations

[12]. J. Matthew Gallman, *Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia During the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 100.
[13] David O'Keefe to "Dear Jane" 26 March 1863, WC32321.
[14] James Healy to "Dear Parents" 30 March 1864, WC65439.

were necessarily more muted, confined to a small number of Irish American comrades. Indeed, it was rarely mentioned in the correspondence of Irishmen who served outside ethnic units. The 1865 St. Patrick's Day of Richard Barrington of the 1st Missouri Engineers was likely far more typical of how Irish Americans spent the occasion—thinking of home: "this is St padys day but we have no chance to drownd the old toad here. I hope that I will be home the next good old St day and drink his health a double time along with you and my friends".[15]

For the great bulk of soldiers and sailors, men like Richard Barrington, being Irish was but one element of their identity—and as a result it was not the primary driver behind their selection of who they marched to war with. This did not mean they were any less Irish American than those serving under green flags. In fact, when viewed in comparative perspective, it is apparent that little separated those who chose to represent distinctly ethnic units from those who served in mixed formations. As individuals, they were virtually indistinguishable, often sharing similar motivations, experiences and pride in their Irish cultural heritage. The key difference came in their military identity. The men who marched to war in "Irish" companies and regiments had explicitly chosen to place themselves on the front lines as public representatives of Irish America. "Irishness" was the primary mark of identity within their units, just as for others it might be political affiliation, regional distinctiveness or occupational status.[16] As such, those who served within them sought and were expected to proudly accentuate that Irishness. As we shall see, this was something that was understood by all Irish Americans, regardless of whether they served in ethnic or non-ethnic units.

[15] Richard Barrington to "My Dear Wife" 17 March 1865, WC116156.

[16] For example the Democratically affiliated regiments such as the 40th "Mozart" and 42nd "Tammany" Regiments, or the 13th Pennsylvania Reserves, the "Bucktails", who were formed around a nucleus of woodsmen and hunters.

The explicit public trumpeting of Irishness by those who served in ethnic Irish American formations has sometimes been taken as evidence of divided loyalties, but when contextualised as part of the Irish American whole in the Union military it takes on a different complexion. Despite their similar backgrounds, the majority of Irish Americans serving outside green flag regiments rarely vocalised an Irish identity to anything approaching the levels common within entities such as the Irish Brigade. Recognising the relative exceptionalism of the culturally infused statements and actions of these ethnic Irish units suggests that their origins lay not in conflicted loyalties, but in an awareness of their position as the most-public face of the Irish American war effort. One of the benefits of this for the men who served within them was that they enjoyed greater opportunities to express their cultural identity—as with St. Patrick's Day—something their organisers and officers regarded as a necessity given their role in influencing popular opinion both within Irish America and across northern society. One of the burdens was that any failures or setbacks they encountered in service were just as bound up with their culture and ethnicity, something that the men themselves were all too aware of.

Given their choices, their position and the burden they carried, it is no surprise then that those who went to war in ethnic units regarded "Irishness" as the core element of their military identity. In talking up the Irish Brigade's superior esprit-de-corps when compared to other units, John Dougherty of the 63rd New York referred to them explicitly as "the Irishmen".[17] When eager to get into the fray with the 69th New York State Militia in the first summer of the war, Patrick Coffey was disappointed that reports of a Confederate attack proved false, as the regiment "had no chance to fight or Show our Courage as we are waiting patiently for a chance to Show the Southerners what we

[17] John Dougherty to Dear Mother" 4 September 1862, WC93207.

Irishmen can do when we get a going".[18] Patrick Kelly, whose regiment had recently joined the Irish Brigade, was bursting with a sense of Irish pride as he looked forward to the advance on Fredericksburg: "Faugh a ballggh is the war cry and no turn back of course we will cross the river first but no mater trust to irelands bold Brigade to clear the road".[19] All these men were fully aware that the non-ethnic units surrounding them were filled with Irish Americans, but understood that only they represented their ethnicity to the extent that their entire regiment was seen both within and without as "Irish".[20] As evidenced in the Introduction to this thesis, men like Patrick Dooley—who gushed with pride about the performance of green flag regiments at Malvern Hill from the ranks of the mixed 40th New York—would have agreed with that assessment. Another who likely would have done so was American-born William Connell, who was serving with the non-ethnic 7th Vermont Infantry on Ship Island, Mississippi in early 1862. While there he informed his immigrant mother: "there is one irish regiment here is thi best on the island they is a priest with them" (referring to the 9th Connecticut Infantry).[21]

The exalted and exceptional position green flag regiments held as figureheads of the Irish American contribution to the war effort is further reinforced by the fact that Irish Americans serving in non-ethnic units consistently looked for news of them and their officers. Any encounter with them in the field was deemed particularly newsworthy. Writing from the Peninsula in 1862, Matthew Eagan, a Kerry-born immigrant in the 72nd New York, added the titbit that "the Irish Brigade are making a road for our

[18] Patrick Coffey to "My dear Wife" 10 May 1861, WC19650.
[19] Patrick Kelly to "Dear Parents" 27 November 1862, WC22521.
[20] Ryan Keating argues that while Irish Americans rarely viewed their service through an ethnic lense, the public use of ethnicity was vital to the Americanization of green flag units, with their service reaffirming "individual conceptions of republicanism and the place of these men within their adopted nation." Keating, *Shades of Green*, 110-111.
[21] William Connell to "Dear mother" 12 April [1862], WC4028.

artilery to Come on and a telegraph line".[22] Thomas Keating, the American-born son of Irish immigrants, could have joined one of the New York Irish Brigade regiments when he enlisted in September 1861, but instead went to war with the 83rd New York Infantry, perhaps because of pre-war associations with the 9th New York State Militia. Nevertheless, he was keenly interested in the wellbeing of the Irish Brigade and its charismatic leader. He wrote to his mother that he was "sorry to heare that Tom Megher Was hurted at the battle of Antitam i Was Trying to find out if the battle Was Over but I couldint find out".[23] Irish American interest in these representatives extended across state lines and throughout Irish communities in the North. William Cody, another American-born son of Irish immigrants, wrote to his Providence-based family from the ranks of the 3rd Rhode Island Heavy Artillery in South Carolina: "I see by the papers you sent me that they are trying to get Colonel Corcoran released I hope they will succsed".[24]

The overt expressions of unit and by extension Irish identity seen within ethnic regiments had direct parallels in the wider development of esprit-de-corps witnessed in non-Irish formations. Just as Irish Americans serving under green flags lauded their military identity through their Irishness, those within mixed units were often equally keen to celebrate the pride, prowess and military identity of their own regiments.[25]

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[22] Matthew Eagan to "Dear Wife", 4 April 1862, WC25637.

[23] Thomas Keating to "My Deare Mother" 17 February 1863, WC88338.

[24] William Cody to "Dear Mother" 7 February 1862, WC10828. As well as demonstrating the interest Irish Americans took in the leading lights of their ethnicity in the military, these examples, coming from American-born children of Irish immigrants, provide further evidence of the cohesiveness of Irish American communities and identity during this period.

[25] For detailed analyses of how units like the Irish Brigade expressed their Irish identity, see Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*. For ethnic Irish units outside New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts see Keating, *Shades of Green*. The pride and accentuation of "Irishness" in units like the Irish Brigade should be viewed in comparative perspective with other like formations during the Civil War. For example, an accentuation of Texan origins was an intrinsic element in the identity of Hood's Texas Brigade, just as a "western" identity came to be seen as a fundamental component of the Iron Brigade's success. See Susannah J. Ural, *Hood's Texas Brigade: The Soldiers and Families of the Confederacy's Most Celebrated Unit* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana

Excitement and ebullience about their potential feats was something many Irish Americans in non-ethnic organisations expressed shortly after enlistment, and was manifest for many from the moment they got their uniforms. Irish-born Archey Laverty of the 1st New York Infantry was pleased to tell home "we have got our united states blue uniform and we look like sogers now".[26] Likewise William Duff wrote back to Brooklyn in October 1861: "we have just received our new Zouave Uniform from the United States Quarter Master Department in New York so we look smart and neat."[27] New York Irish American John Slattery of the 40th Massachusetts remarked how their Colonel was "a regular fighting man he means to fight, we have got a fine looking Regt".[28] Patrick Dooley—so proud of the Irish regiments—said of his own 40th New York Infantry in July 1861 that "… all our men are picked men we are sending all our delicate men home to New York so I expect what men we have will show a good fight, you shall not hear of the Mozart Regiment running away from the enemy…"[29] John Casey, born in America to Irish parents, reassured his mother that he hoped to come back with his "lorals unfaided" as his 45th Illinois were "the Pride of the West".[30] John Deegan, a late war recruit into the 19th Maine, listed the regiments in his brigade for those at home "so that if you should pick up a paper someday and see an account of their valiant deeds you will know that your humble servant is somewhere close at hand…"[31]

While the overtness of their Irish identity tended to be reliant on the formation within which they served, there was one striking commonality that transcended all army

State University Press, 2017); Alan T. Nolan, *The Iron Brigade: A Military History*, First Indiana University Press edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

[26] Archibald Laverty to "Dear Mother" 1 August 1861, WC100498.
[27] William Duff to "Dear Mother" 4 October 1861, WC18836.
[28] John Slattery to "My Dear Sister" 20 October 1862, WC145128.
[29] Patrick Dooley to "Dear Mother" [illegible] July 1861, WC6206.
[30] John Casey to "Dear Mother" 29 December 1861, WC45783.
[31] John Deegan to "Sister Kate" 28 April 1864, WC68309.

regiments and naval vessels, be they ethnic or mixed. It demonstrates both the high levels of ethnic cohesiveness within Irish America and the importance of the cultural identity that all these men shared. The evidence is overwhelming that consistently and repeatedly within the armed forces, ethnic Irishmen sought out their co-ethnics to act as their closest confidants in the service. Invariably, they endeavoured to coalesce in this way irrespective of the degree of Irish American representation within a company or vessel. This translated itself into their writings, so that whenever an Irish American mentioned another serviceman by name, it was overwhelmingly to reference someone of the same ethnicity. To be sure, these were not the only bonds they had—it was but one in a series of interconnected and inter-related ties which also incorporated non-ethnic men, their company, and their regiment. The level of bonding between Irish Americans and these other groups varied from unit to unit and individual to individual.[32] But it was ethnic and cultural identity that tended to drive the formation of the all-important micro-groups which sustained them through their service. As historian James McPherson has identified, these "bands of brothers" proved especially vital for unit cohesion, representing as they did a small military community that could rely on each other for mutual dependence and support.[33]

Naturally, many Irish American comrades who coalesced in such a way had known each other prior to enlistment, having been drawn from the same northern communities. But the evidence reveals time and again that the ethnic Irish became close, tented and messed together even where no previous relationship existed. These ethnic bonds were most frequently exposed when a soldier died, and Irish Americans not known to family

[32] For evidence of a positive bonding experience across the ethnic and class divide in the 5th New York Infantry see Foote, *Gentlemen and the Roughs*, 2. For a negative one in the 16th Connecticut Infantry, see Gordon, *Broken Regiment*, 87. There is substantial evidence for widespread friction between Irish Americans and natives across a number of units. For further examples see e.g. Ramold, *Baring the Iron Hand*, 98-100.

[33] McPherson, *Cause and Comrades*, 85.

members communicated the news. When labourer James Conner of the 2nd Massachusetts Heavy Artillery succumbed, his family were told that his closest friend was "Denis Toomey of Lowell, who has been with him all the time since he came out".[34] After John Gannon from Co. Tipperary was killed in action at Second Bull Run, his mother received a letter from fellow Irish American John Meehan, stating "I was to him Like a Brother and him to me the fact is we Both Slept and eate together since we first Enlisted".[35] Similarly, James Molony of the 31st New York Infantry stepped up when Stephen O'Shea lost his life at Gaines' Mill, telling his wife he had been her "husbands comrade all the time he was in the armey and was at his side when he was Killed".[36]

Those who joined the navy also hoped to find ethnic Irish from home, or consciously enlisted with them. When he was assigned to USS *Niagara* in late 1863, 16-year-old Dublin immigrant and First Class Boy Henry Clark was asked by his mother how he was settling in on his new vessel. His response demonstrated the importance of cultural affinity in adapting to military life:

> I like this ship better than I thought I should, but as to being lonesome, I am getting over that feeling as there are a great many boys from your neighbahood in this ship so that it begins to be quite cheerful here[37]

James Burns asked his family from aboard USS *Colorado* if they "knew if any the boys has joined the Navy if you do write and let me know what Ship they are in". That he was explicitly referencing fellow Irish is confirmed by the "boys" names: "Michael Fitz Jerald and Sly Bannon and Peter Matt Burns an Dan".[38] Daniel Driscoll told his father

[34] Alfred H. Pulcifer to "Mrs Elizabeth Connor" 25 June 1865, WC63536. Denis and James had previously served together in Company A of the 6th Massachusetts Infantry.
[35] John Meehan to "Mrs Gannon" 27 April 1863, WC105102.
[36] James Molony to "Mrs O Shea" 10 September 1862, WC62805; CWMRA of James Molony, 31st New York Infantry, NYSA.
[37] Henry Clark to "Dear Mother and Father" 6 November 1863, Navy WC4180.
[38] James Burns to "Dear father and Mother" 16 November 1864, Navy WC2286.

from the receiving ship USS *Ohio* in 1861 that his mother "must not freat abought me for I have a good time and plenty that nows me".[39] If an Irish American sailor was unfortunate enough to die it was invariably co-ethnics among the crew who took the lead in dealing with his affairs. When Donegal native Patrick Dougherty passed away aboard USS *South Carolina* off Tybee Island in 1864, fellow Irishmen Patrick Duffey and James Dunphey notified his family and made the headboard for his grave.[40] Similarly when the aforementioned Henry Clark was killed, having had both his legs blown off on USS *Hartford* during the Battle of Mobile Bay, it was his shipmate William Lynam, also likely an Irish American, who broke the news to those at home stating that "if he was my own Brother i cood not have felt worst".[41] Regardless of whether their service was in the army or navy, the importance of shared identity, culture and community shone through for Irish Americans in the men they chose to most closely associate with while in uniform.

As outlined in Chapter One, it was ethnicity and cultural identity—not nativity—that defined inclusion within Irish American micro-groups. When late war enlistee Patrick Galliven of the 10th New York sent his mother two photographs, one was of "a tent mate of mine name Dick Collins", a Canadian-born Irish American substitute.[42] Writing to his Irish-born wife back in Maine after the Battle of Fredericksburg, English-born Irish American Thomas Doyle lamented the fact that his closest friend John Ward was missing in action. Both men had been part of the Irish community in Searsport, and were next-door neighbours.[43] Thomas confessed "I feele lonsum with out him…for John and me allways tented to geather". Though he had enlisted from Belfast (Maine)

[39] Daniel Driscoll to "Dear Farther" 28 November 1861, Navy WC3265.
[40] Patrick Duffey to "Friend Mary Dougherty" 31 August 1864, Navy WC2947.
[41] William Lynam to "My friend Mr Clark" 7 August 1864, Navy WC4180.
[42] Patrick Galliven to "Dear mother" 10 March 1864, WC127032; CWMRA of Richard Collins, 10th New York Infantry, NYSA.
[43] 1860 Census, Searsport, Waldo, Maine.

rather than Searsport, the soldier who had taken care of Ward's possessions was also "a Irish man the name of michal butler".[44] These examples further demonstrate why nativity alone cannot be employed as a measure of ethnic Irish breakdown within the United States military. Foreign-born Irish Americans in the service regarded themselves as ethnically and culturally Irish, and actively sought to participate in the same ethnic Irish micro-groups as the Irish-born. They were also regarded as such by other groups in contemporary society. A good example of this can be seen in the 1861 autobiography of the formerly enslaved Harriet Jacobs, in which she described the racism faced by her son in Boston. Of those who levelled abuse against him "some of the apprentices were Americans, others American-born Irish".[45] When the post-war historian of the 40th New York Infantry sought to describe the particularly Irish character of Company K, he remarked that it was "composed entirely of young men of Irish extraction, but principally born in America".[46] This ethnic identity was something articulated by John Slattery of the 40th Massachusetts Infantry. The son of immigrant parents from Co. Limerick, he had been born and raised in Utica, New York, but enlisted with the Bay Staters while away for work. It was a decision he initially regretted, or so he informed his sister, because: "I should like to be in the same Regt with the utica boys there is only two Irish fellows in this company besides my self", before adding "our captain is a native".[47] When Irish Americans like Slattery discussed or asked after the "boys", they invariably meant Irish American boys. Slattery explicitly articulated this meaning, and further underpinned his sense of cultural identity by differentiating his captain as "a native", despite the fact both he and his officer had been born in the United States.

[44] Thomas Doyle to "My Dear Margaret" 2 January 1863, WC27522.
[45] Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written By Herself* (Boston: Published for the Author, 1861), 279.
[46] Floyd, *History of the Fortieth (Mozart) Regiment*, 56.
[47] John Slattery to "My Dear Sister" 20 October 1862, WC145128.

Beyond nurturing ethnic ties within companies and on-board ship, Irish Americans also made efforts to maintain their community networks beyond their own units. They consistently sought out relatives and friends in the service, and made frequent excursions to meet with them when they were stationed nearby. This ethnic cohesiveness extended even into captivity. Statistical analysis of survival rates within Andersonville Prisoner of War Camp indicate than an Irish-born soldier's chances of survival were greater if a fellow Irishman from his company was imprisoned with him.[48] Broader Irish American cohesion in camps like Andersonville can be qualitatively illustrated through cases like that of Arthur Mulholland, one of the unfortunate few of the Irish 69th Pennsylvania captured during Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg. Arthur did not survive, but those closest to him at the end shared his ethnicity, if not his regiment. John Doyle of the 183rd Pennsylvania Infantry later swore he had seen him alive in the notorious camp, while fellow Irish American Robert Torrey, a draftee in the 90th Pennsylvania Infantry, "placed his name, Co and Regt on his breast" after Arthur had been lowered into the burial pit.[49]

5.2 "American" Identity in Uniform

Taken at face value, the overt expressions of Irish identity by green flag units and the sometimes extraordinary degree of ethnic cohesion displayed by Irish American servicemen could be interpreted as evidence that they saw themselves as "others", set apart from American society. While this is what is often focused on, it is only one side

[48] Costa and Kahn, *Heroes and Cowards*, 152.

[49] R McCrummy to "Hon S.O. Randall" 15 February 1865, Affidavit of Robert Torrey 23 August 1866, both within WC86792. Torrey is confirmed as Irish American as both his parents were recorded as being from Ireland on his 1906 Death Certificate. See Robert H. Torrey Pension Index Card, NARA; Robert Henry Torrey Death Certificate 6 February 1906, Pennsylvania Death Certificates, PHMC.

of the story. The 1860s United States was characterised by diverse and often distinct groups—be they native-born or immigrant—who simultaneously perceived themselves as different from those around them and as part of the American project. These perceived differences were often based around religious belief, ethnic and/or social background and race. While their relatively recent explosion in numbers meant that many Irish Americans were new additions to that project, they had quickly set about carving out a place for themselves within it. A close examination of what ordinary Irish American servicemen said and did reveals the more complex concepts of identity this produced. Increasingly, they had come to see themselves not simply as "Irish", but as distinctly "American Irish".

While events like St. Patrick's Day were important to Irish American servicemen, their writings reveal that they were just as invested in celebrating and participating in traditional American holidays. Thomas McCarthy's immigrant mother was keen to mark Thanksgiving's relevance by sending the 12th Massachusetts Infantry soldier a gift, so he requested "…a likeness of you and Becky you might get a Lozenger box…"[50] Nothing—not even St. Patrick's Day—matched the Fourth of July as the holiday of most frequent reference among Irish Americans troops. The degree to which the Irish embraced America's Independence Day is an important indicator of the extent to which these immigrants sought to commit to their new nation. Celebrating the Fourth of July and the nation's revolutionary heritage was viewed as the preeminent expression of what it meant to be an American by men both North and South during the conflict.[51] The holiday also marked another time for gift giving. Limerick native Joseph Sheedy of the Irish 28th Massachusetts pledged in 1862 that he would "fulfil my promise, and will

[50] Thomas McCarthy to "Dear Mother and Sister" 16 October 1861, WC4642.
[51] See Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 20-21.

send him [his brother] some money for the fourth of July".[52] Tom Monaghan of the 95th Pennsylvania asked his mother to "give Charley for me a dollar to Spend for 4th of July".[53] Independence Day was invariably the date when Irish Americans hoped to be home from the war. Recent immigrant Thomas McCready from Donegal wrote in 1862 "i hope again the 4th of July that i will be shaking hands with you", while Felix Burns of the Irish dominated 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry said a year later "you would Hear the boys talking they would say we will all be home for fourth of July".[54]

Just as telling as their embrace of the Fourth of July were the efforts Irish American servicemen went to in touring sites of historic importance to the United States. When in Charles Town, West Virginia, John Delaney from Co. Laois decided to visit the scene of John Brown's demise: "I was in the cell where he was confined and in the courthouse where he was tried and condemed and was where he was hung".[55] John Toomey from Co. Cork had the chance while on the Peninsula to see "the spot where Cornwallis delivered his sword to Washington."[56] John Boyle took time while stationed near Alexandria not only to see the church where George Washington worshipped, but to make an excursion to Mount Vernon where he saw "the grave of Washington and his wife the are Inside a Brick house having an Iron gate in front you can see the tomstone of himself & his wife beside him".[57] The significance of this history to many Irish Americans was demonstrated by Irish immigrant Daniel Collins of Corcoran's Irish Legion. When he took some booty at Fairfax Courthouse in 1863, the main prize he sent home was "the famous stamp that the Revolution was about".[58]

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[52] Joseph Sheedy to "Dear Father & Mother" 22 May 1862, WC106040.
[53] Tom Monaghan to "Dear Mother" 23 June 1862, WC52908.
[54] Thomas McCready to "Dear Mother" 3 May 1862, WC70669; Felix Burns to "Dear Mother" 9 May 1863, WC123070.
[55] John Delaney to "Dear Mother" [no day] December 1863, WC39990.
[56] John Toomey to "Dear Father and Mother" 8 May 1862, WC5388.
[57] John Boyle to "My Dear Mother" 11 February 1862, WC103714.
[58] Daniel Collins to "Dear Mother" 25 July 1863, WC83617.

Such evidence makes it apparent that men from a wide variety of immigrant backgrounds deeply valued American culture and history and what it represented—a fact that has important ramifications when assessing the motivations that underpinned Irish American service. So too does their concept of community. The commitment and energy that Irish immigrants had poured into their new communities during the immediate antebellum period had helped to foster a sense of self that was not just Irish, but concurrently and inseparably American and Irish. Thousands of future servicemen had been born directly into these American Irish communities during the 1830s and 1840s, while thousands more had grown from children to adults within them. That this sense of community identity was well formed prior to the war is evidenced by the frequent allusions' servicemen made to them. By the time young Cork immigrant Patrick Dugan entered Federal service, his "home" was indisputably the town of Wilmington, Illinois. He frequently communicated the welfare of "all the Wilmington Boys" and "all the boys from Wilmington Parish" to his mother, requesting in return information on "who from Wilmington got killed" following major battles.[59] In like fashion, Patrick Horan from Co. Galway, whose father had died in Ireland during the Famine, updated his mother on "all the Rochester boyes", Dubliner John Mahon wrote to tell of "all the Boys from Hudson", while Kilkenny immigrant Jeremiah Keenan transmitted news of "the Churchville boys".[60] Irish-born Daniel Reddy, in communicating the death of fellow immigrant John Murray to those at home in 1864, specifically referenced a number of his other Irish comrades and lamented the fact that "all the woburn boys are gone but Foley and me it makes me feel very lonesome when i think of it".[61] As Daniel's correspondence implies, these "boys" were most commonly

[59] Patrick Dugan to "Dear Mother" 3 August 1864 and Patrick Dugan to "Dear Mother" 19 January 1863, both in WC144840.
[60] Patrick Horan to "Dear mother" 16 February 1862, WC47243. John Mahon to "Dear Mother" 26 February 1862, WC10604. Jeremiah Keenan to "Dear mother" 16 April 1863, WC14441.
[61] Daniel Reddy to "Mrs Murry" 23 June 1864, WC91242.

ethnic Irish members of the community. The men John Mahon chose to name in his correspondence were civilian William Phillips—the American-born son of an Irish immigrant—and fellow soldiers John Barry, William Galbraith and John Moore, all of whom were Irish-born.[62] The "Churchville boys" that Jeremiah Keenan identified, David O'Connell and George Weldon, had likewise been born in Ireland.[63] Though less frequent, there are examples of Irish Americans including non-ethnic Irish among the "boys". American-born John Sullivan of the 102nd New York Infantry mentioned non-Irish Bill Hawley, Earnest Offerman and John Hilloves as some of "my own town boys" from Angelica who "are all very kind and Brotherlike to me".[64]

This sense of a distinctly American Irish regional identity had grown so much by the outbreak of the Civil War that it could even be a catalyst for disharmony within ethnic Irish units. Regional factionalisation in itself was nothing new, and was something the Irish had carried with them to the United States—most famously in the form of the rival gangs of "Corkonians" and "Fardowners" who vied with each other for work on antebellum canals and railroads.[65] But by 1861, part of this sense of belonging had transferred onto specific American locales, causing some Irish to prefer to serve with others from their new towns and cities. Being unexpectedly denied this opportunity

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[62] John Mahon to "Dear Mother" 5 January 1862 and John Mahon to "Dear Mother" 26 February 1862, both in WC10604. For William Phillips' ethnicity see 1850 U.S. Census, Hudson Ward 2, Columbia, New York, NARA. For John Barry see NYMRA of John Barry, 91st New York Infantry, NYSA. For William Galbraith see New York, State Census, 1855, Hudson Ward 4, Columbia, New York, ancestry.com. For John Moore see 1860 U.S. Census, Hudson Ward 4, Columbia, New York, NARA. John Moore appears to be another of the many Irish recorded as of Irish nativity on the Federal Census, but entered as American-born on the muster rolls.

[63] Jeremiah Keenan to "My fond and loving mother" 27 January [1863] and Jeremiah Keenan to "Dear mother" 16 April 1863, both in WC14441; NYMRA of David O'Connell and George Weldon, 140th New York Infantry, NYSA. O'Connell had enlisted from Churchville, while in 1860 Weldon had been working as a farm labourer in nearly Riga. See 1860 U.S. Census, Riga, Monroe, New York, NARA.

[64] John Sullivan to "Dear Mother" 30 January 1862, WC12866. For Sullivan as for most of these men, groups such as these formed the "band of brothers" that McPherson has identified as so important for unit cohesion. See McPherson, *Cause and Comrades*, 85.

[65] Kenny, *American Irish*, 65; Kenny, "Labor and Labor Organisations," in Lee and Casey (ed) *Making the Irish American*, 355.

could lead to friction. An example of this can be seen with the reorganisation that marked the early days of Corcoran's Irish Legion. When two Buffalo Irish companies were amalgamated with those from New York City, disaffection ensued. In protest at the move the Buffalo Irish "threw off their knapsacks and would not mind their officers not even Corcoran". The men could be only be placated by assurances of their value, and by being assigned duties to act as the Provost Guard.[66]

This growing embrace of an increasingly American Irish identity did not mean that all these men regarded themselves as being one in the same as the non-ethnic American soldiers they fought beside. In March 1865, late war recruit Denis Larkin of the 6th New York Heavy Artillery wrote his parents to let them know that as "Jeff is gone up the Spout" the war would soon be drawing to a close. That outcome now seemed certain, despite the fact that Dennis's father and mother had "allways saidi that the south would get the Best of the yankes". In any event, Dennis clarified, "it is not the yankes that is doning the fighting it is the irish lads that is doning it".[67] Denis Larkin viewed the native-born "Yankees" as other—and his parents certainly did. Yet despite his apparently overt rejection of "Yankees", Dennis's writings offer glimpses of the inter-generational development of a distinctly American Irish identity. The community he regarded as home, and that which he felt was his own, was firmly embedded in the village of Canton, St. Lawrence County, New York. He peppered his correspondence consistently and repeatedly with references to it; his desire to see Canton once more, his inquiries after Canton friends and neighbours, and his pining for information on the Canton girls. Just because Denis Larkin did not regard himself as a "Yankee" did not mean that he did not regard the United States as his home.

[66] Patrick Kinnane to "Dear Sister" 27 [November] 1862, WC75830.
[67] Denis Larkin to "Farther and mother" 23 March 1865, WC120669.

Analysis of Irish American service has largely failed to take into consideration the potential impact on identity of the experiential differences that marked out many of the young men who enlisted in the military from older generations within their community. This was particularly true for those who had arrived as children during the Famine migration. A boy who had arrived in the United States at the age of 10 in 1851 could be significantly more pliable in terms of identity than a 20-year-old who landed the same year. While both tend to be classified as "recent immigrants", only one had grown to adulthood in the streets and laneways of America, the country where most of the formative events that shaped them as men occurred. It could not fail to leave its imprint.[68] For soldiers like Denis Larkin, it created a sense of self that was very Irish but also very centred on their local American community—in his case Canton. Tens of thousands of the Irish Americans who served in the war shared a similar background.[69]

One of the consequences of the range and breadth of lived experiences within 1860s Irish America was that it opened the door for a number of men to exercise a degree of fluidity over their public identities. As was evident in the case of Patrick Carraher's name-change discussed in Chapter Four, this may have been particularly attractive to those seeking to avoid or escape ethnic prejudice. For Irish Americans who had been born and grown up in the United States, or who had spent long enough in the country for their accents to pass as American, this may have enabled them to downplay their ethnicity as circumstances dictated. In a world where many in society viewed their cultural identity in a negative light, a degree of malleability in how they publicly

[68] Susannah Ural has argued that because many Irish Americans were recent immigrants, they viewed the war first and foremost from the perspective of what it could provide them as Irishmen before doing so in terms of their American identity. See Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 134-135.

[69] The different views and perspectives that young men who grew up in the 1850s could have when compared older generations has been examined with respect to other demographic groups in the Civil War, see e.g. Peter Carmichael, *The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War and Reunion* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press: 2005).

presented themselves could prove useful. Though such activity is extremely difficult to identify, it is possible that some of the nativity discrepancies apparent in military records noted in Chapter Two fossilise this fluidity. Cases abound of soldiers and sailors born in Ireland who were recorded as American-born on their enlistment, an "error" that is invariably unidirectional. Men like Michael Brady, James Carey, Denis Driscoll, Owen McGowan and James O'Neil were all recorded as Irish-born on the census, but as American when they enlisted.[70] Others, such as John Riley, an Irish American born in England, and John Scully, an Irish American born in Canada, were likewise said to have been native to the United States.[71] John Scanlan, who survived the war, had been recorded as Canadian-born on his enlistment (which had been under an alias), but as Irish-born on post-war censuses.[72] Neither was this restricted to men who had arrived in America as children. Patrick Finan and Denis Horgan were recent adult immigrants from Ireland who in the military were recorded as having been from the United States.[73] Barney Carr, the assisted immigrant from Co. Derry, had been taken from a New York institution to work on a farm out west; when he enlisted in Illinois, his birthplace was recorded as New York.[74] Though far less frequent, there are some for whom the opposite was the case. Jeremiah Dorgan, recorded as having been born in Maine while a child on the 1850 Census, was listed as a Corkman when he joined the 2nd Louisiana

[70] WC13603; 1860 U.S. Census, Saugerties, Ulster, New York, NARA; CWMRA of Michael Bradym 156th New York Infantry, NYSA; Navy WC2356; 1860 U.S. Census, Philadelphia Ward 3, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, NARA; Naval Rendezvous, NARA; Navy WC2633; 1860 U.S. Census, Erie, Erie, Pennsylvania, NARA; Naval Rendezvous, NARA; Navy WC2255; 1860 U.S. Census, Boston Ward 7, Suffolk, Massachusetts, NARA; Naval Rendezvous, NARA; WC129489; 1860 U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Lockport, Niagara, New York, NARA; CWMRA of James O'Neil, 2nd New York Mounted Rifles, NYSA.

[71] Navy WC2821; 1850 U.S. Census, Philadelphia Cedar Ward, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, NARA; Military Enlistment of John Riley, United States Marine Corps, NARA; WC55575; 1860 U.S. Census, Salem Ward 5, Essex, Massachusetts, NARA; CMSR of John Scully, Company F, 9th Massachusetts Infantry, NARA.

[72] Navy WC18243; 1870 U.S. Census, Detroit Ward 9, Wayne, Michigan, NARA; 1880 U.S. Census, Detroit, Wayne, Michigan, NARA; Naval Rendezvous, NARA.

[73] Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 126; Navy WC2318, NARA.

[74] Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 67; Illinois, Databases of Illinois Veterans, Index, 1775-1995, ancestry.com.

Infantry.[75] James Healy had a birthplace of Massachusetts on the 1860 census, but when he entered the 9th Massachusetts Infantry—an ethnic Irish regiment—his nativity changed to Ireland.[76] Officers and local administrators undoubtedly played a role in miss-assigning nativity, but it seems that some Irish Americans may have made a conscious choice to misrepresent it themselves.[77]

The incidents of altered nativity appear to be particularly prevalent in naval records, and it is tempting to speculate that this may have been partially due to the reduced level of control Irish Americans had over where and with whom they served in that branch of service. That assertions of American birth were seen as advantageous where doubt existed is suggested by the cases of well-known figures such as General Phil Sheridan and Civil War photographer Timothy O'Sullivan. Both these men contended that they had born in the United States, though question-marks continue to surround those assertions. While Sheridan said he had been born in Albany, claims persist that he entered the world either in Co. Cavan or at sea during the family's crossing. Timothy O'Sullivan stated he was of American nativity on at least one job application, but following his premature death his father apparently listed him as having been born in Ireland.[78] Regardless of the actual location of their birth, both Sheridan and O'Sullivan were keenly aware that it was far more advantageous to be seen as American. On what was ostensibly his first visit to Ireland in 1871, Sheridan reinforced this by seeking to

[75] WC130737; 1850 U.S. Census, Ellsworth, Hancock, Maine, NARA; CMSR of Jeremiah Dorgan, Company H, 2nd Louisiana Infantry, NARA.

[76] WC65439; 1850 U.S. Census, Boston Ward 7, Suffolk, Massachusetts, NARA; CMSR of James Healy, Company D, 9th Massachusetts Infantry, NARA.

[77] On miss-assignation of soldiers, particularly late war recruits, see Apthorp Gould, *Investigations*, 15.

[78] The question of Sheridan's birthplace seems unlikely to be resolved. For a forceful assertion that Sheridan was born in Co. Cavan see Eric J. Wittenberg, *Little Phil: A Reassessment of the Civil War Leadership of Gen. Philip H. Sheridan* (Dulles, Virginia: Brassey's, 2002), 142-143. On Timothy O'Sullivan see Shiels, *The Irish in the American Civil War*, 246; James D. Horan, *Timothy O'Sullivan: America's Forgotten Photographer* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1966), 22-26.

place considerable distance between himself and the home of his parents. He told a correspondent of the *New York Herald* that his "family emigrated so long ago that I am unable to say whether it belonged to the north or south [of Ireland]. It strikes me it came from Westmeath."[79] Given his background, it strains credulity that Sheridan would have been so ignorant of his Irish origins. It is quite possible that at least some of the altered nativity prevalent on enlisted men's military records was intended to achieve similar results. While in their private lives these men may well have been proud of their Irish cultural background, it was readily apparent that there was nothing but benefits to be had from presenting oneself in as American a fashion as possible.[80] The cases of men like James Healy and Jeremiah Dorgan suggest that, occasionally, this trend may have operated in reverse; perhaps among men who were keen to accentuate their Irishness within ethnic regiments, or with those who were particularly eager to overtly express their ethnic and cultural identity.

It is evident that as the war loomed, American and Irish forms of identity and cultural association were increasingly grafting together. Still further demonstration of the extent to which this was true was offered by Irish-born Sergeant James Livingston, who had enlisted in Corcoran's Irish Legion as a 19-year-old. When addressing a younger member of his family in an 1863 letter home from Suffolk, Virginia, he chose to use the quintessentially American sport of baseball as an analogy for the positions and movements of "miky Corcoran" and his Irishmen:

> We are Plaing Ball here at Peresent i am hinder[?] and we have to Pitchers and Pleanty of Catcher the home Base is Suffolk or Richmond Fany and mat are

[79] *New York Herald* 12 May 1871.

[80] David Gleeson has identified a similar case in the form of noted southern author William Gilmore Simms. The son of an Irish father with whom he was estranged, Simms discarded his Irish heritage to accentuate his South Carolina identity, becoming the antebellum South's leading novelist. See Gleeson, *Green and the Gray*, 6-7.

> Fielders and miky Corcoran holds the Bat Ben Conlin holds the Grub and Your uncle Nabs all Bad Playrs up in the Gaurd hous[81]

Though it was likely more frequent, becoming embedded in American society to the extent that James Livingston and others had was not the sole preserve of Irish Americans who had been born or grown to adulthood the United States. Day Labourer Thomas Carr was a married man when he immigrated with his wife and child in the late 1850s, settling in Cazenovia, Madison County, New York. When war came he enlisted in the local regiment, the 35th New York Infantry, but was later transferred to the 80th New York Infantry, formed largely of men from Ulster County. Within his new formation he struck up a friendship with Assistant Surgeon William Taylor. Taylor had no connections to Ireland—what the two men shared was an affection for Madison County.[82] Taylor later wrote that "Being from the same county (Madison) I had often conversed with him [Thomas] in relation to our local matters and always found him very much interested in anything pertaining to home affairs".[83]

There is perhaps no stronger evidence for how enmeshed these men's American and Irish identities had become than in the meaning they placed on the word "country". For when Irish Americans spoke of "country", they meant not Ireland, but the United States. This was true even for recent immigrants. Writing to his father in Ireland from USS

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[81] James Livingston to "Dear mother" [no day] April 1863, WC108486. During this period baseball was particularly popular among young men from major population centres, and players of immigrant descent—particularly Irish—would come to dominate the sport for much of the late nineteenth century. For a discussion of their role see Jerrold I. Casway, *The Culture and Ethnicity of Nineteenth Century Baseball* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2017), 7-31. On baseball during the Civil War, see George B. Kirsch, *Baseball in Blue and Gray: The National Pastime During the Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003). Kirsch notes that while most of those who played in the 1850s were native-born, hundreds of Irish names appeared on the rosters of major and minor clubs in places like Brooklyn, Newark and Jersey City in the immediate antebellum period. See Kirsch, *Baseball*, 81.

[82] William Taylor's parents hailed from Massachusetts. He appears in the 1860 Census as a Physician Student in Nelson, Madison County. 1860 U.S. Census, Nelson, Madison, New York, NARA.

[83] William Taylor to "Doctor Chamberlain" 22 November 1864, WC77208.

Wabash in 1863, Patrick Finan was pleased that all the new arrivals from his native Sligo were "like to bee Drafted as Soone as the land" as "thear is a lot of young Fellows a round New York that Wont Fight For thear Country and the ought to Bee Made Fight or els clear out".[84] Finan's statement captures the belief held by many Irish that the United States became "thear Country" from the moment they decided to make a life there. William McCollister from Co. Antrim held a similar view. Facing battle on the Virginia Peninsula in the summer of 1862, he told his mother: "I am just as willing for to die for my Country as any white boy living."[85] Similarly, when Tyrone native James Kerr was greeted with troubling news from Philadelphia, he complained that he had "enough to perplex my mind without it the duties of a Soldier Battling for his Countrys rights".[86]

Irish Americans in the Union military were proud of their Irish ethnic and cultural identity. For those who served surrounded by fellow ethnics, that pride regularly manifested itself in overt displays of "Irishness". Such public manifestations of identity were necessarily more muted for the majority who served in mixed units, where energies were often channelled towards a pride in uniform and regiment. But no matter their surroundings their cultural identity shone through in the company they kept—revealed in the ethnic background of the men they slept beside, ate beside, and died beside. Yet the public (and historical) dominance of the ethnic portion of these men's identities belies the fact that for many by 1861, being an American was also an intrinsically important part of who they were. Their Irish communities were in the United States, and by extension their home was in the United States. Thousands of them had bought into the history, culture and ideals of that new home, and had come to

[84] Patrick Finan to "Dear Father" 24 June 1863, Navy WC2867.
[85] William McCollister to "Dear Mother" 19 June 1862, WC53297.
[86] James Kerr to "Dear Friends" 28 March 1863, WC25992.

regard it as their "country". This sense of commitment to the United States would prove highly significant once the guns started firing in 1861. But before examining how it influenced their enlistment, it is first appropriate to examine what is perhaps the most convincing form of evidence of their firm commitment to America—how they interacted with Ireland.

5.3 The Place of Ireland in Irish American Identity

Coming to grips with Irish American identity is an important precursor to an examination of motivations for enlistment. So too is gaining a fuller understanding of how most Irish American servicemen viewed and interacted with Ireland during the mid-nineteenth century. The nineteenth century Irish America of popular imagination is of an exiled people who longed for the opportunity to return to their true home. An image that was cultivated and promoted from within the Irish community through story and song, it has served to reinforce perceptions of the immigrant as victim, and the United States as a country that was subordinated to the interests of Ireland.[87] Doubtless many felt that way. The evidence is compelling that most—particularly in the military—did not.

In the memory and historiography of the Civil War, analysis and discussion of the interaction of Irish American servicemen with Ireland has been utterly dominated by the role of the Fenian Brotherhood, the New York-based revolutionary organisation formed in 1859 as an American branch of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, which had been

[87] The majority of Irish emigrant ballads that Kerby Miller examined were melancholic in nature, with many characterising the emigrant as a politicised exile from Ireland. The motif of the emigrant as involuntary exile was particularly strong in ballads that dramatised the emigrant's story, which often referenced a longed for return to Ireland. See Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 560-566. On the "culture of exile" in popular song during this period, see Phil Eva, "Home Sweet Home? The 'culture of exile' in mid-Victorian popular song", *Popular Music* 16:2 (1992), 131-150.

founded in Dublin the previous year.[88] These Fenians, whose aim was to support the establishment of an Irish Republic, have long been regarded as one of the most substantial drivers of Irish enlistment in the Union military.[89] The support the Fenians garnered for the "Cause of Ireland" has been seen as instigating a wave of recruitment into the United States armed forces, as men sought to gain the military experience the American Civil War offered to apply in a planned future confrontation with the British in Ireland. This in turn has lent credence to the argument that large numbers of the men in uniform were significantly more interested in the political future of Ireland than they were that of the United States. The wealth of source material written on and by some of the Fenian movement's major leaders and the consistent prominence of the organisation in the pages of Irish nationalist publications have gone a long way to ensuring the continued focus on the Fenian role during the conflict. But while nationalist newspapers such as the New York *Irish American* and Boston *Pilot* consistently highlighted Fenian service and sacrifice during the conflict, when viewed in broader perspective, the evidence suggests that the practical influence and significance of Fenianism as a motivator for Irish enlistment was slight.

The Fenian Brotherhood was certainly extremely popular among Irish immigrants, and there were those Irish in Federal uniform for whom the interests of Ireland surpassed all else. It is also the case that many Fenians did join the Union military, while thousands more became paid up members during their service via the "Fenian Circles" that were dotted about the army and navy. At first glance, the figures seem impressive, as by 1865, the Brotherhood had as many as 50,000 members and up to 200,000 supporters in America.[90] However, while it was an undeniably important

[88] On the formation of the Fenians, see Brundage, *Irish Nationalists,* 99-100. For a detailed discussion of the Fenians during the American Civil War, see Steward and McGovern, *The Fenians,* 29-47.
[89] See e.g. Ural, *Harp and the Eagle,* 41.
[90] For these figures see Brundage, *Irish Nationalists*, 89.

organisation, the evidence suggests only a relatively few highly-politicised hardliners enlisted to gain military experience in the hopes of a future war with Britain. Just a little more than 100 Civil War veterans returned to Europe to participate in Fenian activities between 1865 and 1867—many of them former officers—while the Fenian force that launched its invasion of Canada from Buffalo in 1866 numbered in the region of 1,000 men, only some of whom were former servicemen.[91] This is not to say that large numbers of Irish Americans in service did not support an independent Ireland—thousands of them did. But for the great bulk of Irish, their political engagement with the national question was limited to a vocal support of the Irish independence struggle, a willingness to periodically dip into their pockets for the cause of Ireland, and, if they were so inclined, to publicly communicate that position through Fenian membership. As historian David Brundage has demonstrated, that membership was often about more than just Irish nationalism—it was also closely tied to the labour movement and the efforts of trade unionists to improve conditions for those, like them, who were on the lowest rungs of American society.[92] Simply put, while many ordinary Irish Americans viewed the survival of a strong United States as vital for both the future of Ireland and the Irish people, very few had any intention of a permanent return to the land of their

[91] For a discussion of the background to the Fenian organisation among Union soldiers and their efforts to return to Ireland for revolutionary purposes see Michael H. Kane, "American Soldiers in Ireland, 1865-67", *The Irish Sword: The Journal of the Military History Society of Ireland* 23: 91 (2002), 103-140. Although the numbers who participated in such operations were impacted by divisions within the Fenian Movement, the figures are still extremely low given the supposed primacy of Irish freedom in the minds of many Irish Americans. For an insight into some of the divisions and failures that accompanied efforts to support the post-war Fenian efforts in Ireland, see Lucy E. Sayler, *Under the Starry Flag: How a Band of Irish Americans Joined the Fenian Revolt and Sparked a Crisis over Citizenship*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018), 75-88. For analyses of the incursions into Canada, see Peter Vronsky, *Ridgeway: The American Fenian Invasion and the 1866 Battle That Made Canada* (Toronto: Allen Lane Canada, 2011) and Christopher Klein, *When the Irish Invaded Canada: The Incredible True Story of the Civil War Veterans who Fought for Ireland's Freedom* (New York: Doubleday, 2019).

[92] Brundage, *Irish Nationalists*, 102.

birth. It was no accident that the Irish were among the least likely of all immigrants to return to Europe.[93]

When it came to it, even those Irish American servicemen who were apparently ardent Irish nationalists tended to subordinate that cause in favour of the immediate necessity of defeating secession. English-born John Corcoran offers one such example. When rumours abounded in the late summer of 1862 that Britain was on the cusp of recognising the Confederacy, it caused him to fly into a rage:

> if that damed England has any thing to do with us woe be to the Read Raskels you may thing strong of me for thes sentiments I use aganst my Birth Place but if England was to intifere I wold neaver take a live English Soldgier I am down on that nation and willing to do anything to see that Nashion fall and Ireland the Home of the Brave free from Her Enemies Hands.

Yet in the same breadth, John Corcoran demonstrated that he married this Irish nationalism with an unquestionable dedication to Union victory, a cause for which he was willing to give his life: "there is a place called Richmond it will fall and then the times will get first rate…we are willing to go there any minet and share in taking it we have got our minds made up neaver to surrender".[94] Patrick Finan, the USS *Wabash* crewman who felt his fellow Irishmen should be forced to "fight for their country" the moment they arrived in America, had immediately added: "But I Wish to God it Was For the Freedom of Ireland I Was Fighting for in the Place of What We are Fighting

[93] Between 1852 and 1913 Irish return migration from America are estimated to have run at only *c*. six percent of the outflow. See Timothy J. Hatton and Jeffrey G. Williamson, "After the Famine: Emigration from Ireland, 1850-1913", *Journal of Economic History* 53:3 (1993), 575-576. Though figures are scant for the mid-nineteenth century, it is telling that given the scale of Irish American service only 219 Federal pensions were being claimed in Ireland in 1883. Figures for the turn of the 20th century suggest the Irish had the lowest repatriant ratio of any major European country at that point, and that those Irish who did journey back to Ireland did so for only short periods before returning to the United States. For a discussion see David Fitzpatrick, *The Americanisation of Ireland: Migration and Settlement 1841-1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 6-18.

[94] John Corcoran to "Dear Parents" 1 August 1862, WC10461. John Corcoran provides yet another example of the problem of equating nativity with ethnic identity in American Civil War servicemen.

For."[95] These may seem contradictory or conflicting viewpoints, but it is apparent that Patrick Finan did not regard them as such. Notwithstanding his feelings towards the war at the time of writing (1863), or how much he may have perceived the freedom of Ireland as the purer or higher cause, he accepted Federal service as his primary duty.

Another whose letters could be interpreted as indicative of competing loyalties and allegiance are those of Sligo native James Henry. On the occasion of being promoted into the officer corps of the 37th New York "Irish Rifles", James wrote home of the speech he made before the regiment. "I used a great conglomeration of language about Ireland—native land—adopted country—free and religious liberty—dying for the cause—and all that kind of thing." These words in themselves are indicative of how the use of such imagery and phraseology about Ireland had an air of the performative about it, and were an expected flourish in public oration. Nevertheless, James did appear to believe in them. He continued:

> God Grant—and I hope it may not be far distant—that the time will come when I shall have the sacred task of leading on a band of my countrymen to free their native land. I think, if this war was now over, that I could raise 200 men, as good as ever stepped—out of this single regiment to follow me—that's something for only an acquaintance of 9 months.[96]

Yet despite such rhetoric, James Henry was committed to the cause of the United States, and equally committed to his own future. An ambitious soldier, he had set himself the task of reaching the rank of Colonel before war's end. When muster out came before he had accomplished that goal, he chose not to turn his full attention to the "sacred task" of Ireland. Instead he opted to fight on for the Union, and try his hand at forging a long-term military career in the regulars. He was mortally wounded at Spotsylvania Court House as a Sergeant in the 11th United States Infantry.[97]

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[95] Patrick Finan to "Dear Father" 24 June 1863, Navy WC2867.
[96] James Henry to "My Dear Father" 10 January 1861 [1862], WC134153.
[97] WC134153.

Although John Corcoran, Patrick Finan and James Henry each explicitly referenced the cause of Ireland, for them it was still the United States first.[98] Even then, what makes their sentiments regarding their ancestral home most notable is their rarity within written correspondence. The historiographical focus on Fenianism has served to almost entirely mask the reality of how the majority of Irish American servicemen viewed and interacted with Ireland. Like so much else in their service, these interactions were not dominated by the political, but by the practical and personal—not by the future of Ireland, but by their future lives in the United States.

Within ordinary Irish American correspondence, any occasional references to the political future of Ireland are entirely eclipsed by a very different form of interaction with the "Old Sod". These substantially more frequent exchanges provide further evidence of the extent to which Irish Americans had committed to their new country. Patrick Delanty of USS *Carondelet* was one of those who held a deep and heartfelt affection for Ireland. Indeed, he hoped to return "on a visit" someday. As was the case with many other Irish Americans, he and his family members in the United States were expected to financially assist those among their relatives who had not had the opportunity to emigrate.[99] By 1862, Patrick had grown particularly unimpressed with begging letters from his farmer uncle back in Laois, whom he felt "must live pretty

[98] Patrick Steward and Bryan McGovern's analysis of Fenians during the war supports this conclusion. They found that many potential Fenian recruits appeared to be more ideologically attached to the United States than their homeland, and that Irish American Union servicemen often referenced Ireland's future independence as a means of creating an "imagined community" among their fellows. In their determination, "Irish American soldiers were more inclined to risk their lives for the United States than for Ireland." Steward and McGovern, *The Fenians*, 38-40. As William L. Burton characterised it, "most Irish-Americans were committed to America and to themselves, not to historic and Old World quarrels", see Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*, 154.

[99] The correspondence of working class Irish Americans makes it apparent that those who had emigrated to the United States were regarded as the fortunate ones, and they were expected to assist those less fortunate who had remained in Ireland. Old and new communities on both sides of the Atlantic remained umbilically linked across decades, with many immigrants feeling a profound sense of obligation to those left behind. For a telling example of this, see Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 83-88.

high" if he was unable to survive on his income and produce. But Patrick also accepted that his uncle's situation was not what it had once been. The man's son and siblings had all emigrated, and the community had been transposed across the Atlantic to such an extent that there remained only "three or four persons he knowed" around his birthplace. The Union sailor admitted that it must now be "a gloomy looking place". [100] Patrick Delanty had a favoured solution for his uncle's predicament. He hoped he would leave and join the rest of the family in America.[101]

The Irish American desire to bring as many of their family and friends as possible to the United States is demonstrated time and again in their correspondence. Writing from Chicago, future 23rd Illinois Infantry soldier Edmund Dwyer told his father in Co. Limerick that "we all would like to have you with us…it is bad for you to be separated from your children in your advanced age when you need them".[102] John Shea of the 1st Kansas Infantry felt the same, though in his case his first priority was his sister. He asked his mother in Co. Kerry whether she would "let my Sister come or not", adding "I donte want to be Sinding for her if you donte let her come".[103] Matthew Eagan of the 72nd New York Infantry was similarly keen to "send for John"—presumably a close relative—though he thought it best to wait until he was "free and done with the army".[104] For his part, Patrick Dougherty of USS *South Carolina* did declare his intention "to go Home to Ireland" after being paid off, but rather than revolution, the purpose of his trip was "to bring his Mother out here".[105] From the South Carolina blockade, Patrick Finan of USS *Wabash* wrote to Sligo town in order to let his father know he was "Willing to Pay your three Passiges in New York yours Mary Ann and

[100] Patrick Delanty to "My Dear Mother & Sisters" 19 May 1862, Navy WC2163.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Edmund Dwyer to "my dear Father" 30 January 1859, WC132012.
[103] John Shea to "Dear Mother" 6 October 1861, WC15721.
[104] Matthew Eagan 16 March 1862, WC25637.
[105] Patrick Duffy to "Friend Mary Dougherty" 31 August 1864, Navy WC2947.

Johnsey Mullroonys", though in the latter case, it was on the precondition that "his Wife is Willing to let him Come hear".[106] Edward Fitzpatrick of the 10th New Jersey Infantry, who kept up a regular correspondence with the "Old Country", was pleased to hear the news while in the Petersburg trenches that "the old man paid the brothers pasage out to this country".[107] Michael Daly of the 7th Illinois Cavalry took the time to send money from Tennessee to his mother in New York, expressly in order to secure the passage of his sisters from Ireland. "it is about time that we should have them in this Country", he wrote.[108] His thoughts were also turning towards a family of his own. Michael wanted a wife from the "old sod" and was determined that if he could not find one "already to hand", he would "import one".[109]

There can be little doubt that throughout the four years of conflict, vast sums of money earned in the ranks of the Union's armed forces was spent on realising the permanent relocation of thousands of family and community members from Ireland to the United States. Far from seeking ways to return permanently to Ireland, what occupied the efforts of the great majority of Irish immigrants was ensuring they brought as much of Ireland as possible to them. In their unstinting efforts to assist large-scale emigration across the Atlantic these men signalled precisely where they conceived their futures. The future they wanted for themselves and their families was an American one, and accordingly their long-term commitments were to their new home, their transposed communities, and their new nation.

For these working-class men the promise that America held often went beyond its capacity to offer a home for them and their extended families. While politically they

[106] Patrick Finan to "Dear Father" 25 January 1863, Navy WC2867.
[107] Edward Fitzpatrick to "My Dear Wife" 23 March [1865], WC142303.
[108] Michael Daly to "My Dear Mother" 14 March 1863, WC143339.
[109] Michael Daly to "Dear Brother" 5 March 1863, WC143339. The pension files indicate that it was commonplace for single Irish men in America to have matches made with young women from their locality of origin in Ireland, who would then follow them to the United States.

might not have shared much in common with Abraham Lincoln, many would have agreed with his assessment that the United States was the "last best hope of earth".[110] No matter the conditions they found themselves in, the American republic and its broad political franchise offered and promised far more immediate, practical and personal benefit than the abstraction of physical sacrifice for Irish nationhood ever could. As a result, the immigrant embrace of the democratic republic and its ideals could be swift and immediate. Few expressed their ideological reasoning for committing themselves to their new home more forcefully than recent arrival Patrick O'Brien. Writing home to West Cork from the deck of the gunboat USS *Clifton*, he exhorted his mother to "make up your mind to come to this country", promising to send for her and the rest of the family. In offering one of the reasons why they should relocate, he launched a blistering attack on the Hungerfords, the landed family who had been his Irish landlords:

> Tell Hungerford not to make a fool of himself, and that he could have a hungry hunt after my wages even to the day of judgement and then he would have no more of it than he has now and that is none, such men are no more thought of here then I am myself in fact a great deal less as him and his like would get well booted here.[111]

For Patrick O'Brien, the United States was the great leveller, where the toxic relationships between landlord and tenant familiar to so many in Ireland could be overturned. Irish step-migrant and future Union sailor John Crowley was similarly impressed with the promise his new country held when he first arrived at the Emigrant Landing Depot in Castle Garden. "The ship loads of people that are arriving here every day from all parts of Europe would astonish you but still there is plenty of room it is easy to get a job…there is no mistake about America it is finest Country in the world."[112] For Patrick O'Brien, John Crowley, and a multitude like them, the United

[110] Lincoln referred to the United States as such in his Annual Message to Congress on 1 December 1862.
[111] Patrick O'Brien to "Dear Mother" 15 October 1862?, Navy WC2732.
[112] John Crowley to "My Dear Tom" 12 May [no year], Navy WC2920.

States—no matter its faults—presented an opportunity to live in a society that did not have the social strictures that were placed on themselves and their families in Ireland. They would always be Irish and would always look to support Ireland and Irish people—but they were enthusiastic Americans now too.

When added to the evidence of their growing American Irish identity, the reality of the practical interactions these men had with Ireland adds significant complexity to our understanding of how they positioned themselves with respect to both Ireland and America. Their multi-layered identity incorporated close ties to immigrants who hailed from their locality of origin within Ireland, and usually extended back across the Atlantic into those old regions. A sense of economic and moral obligation to those left behind—commonly manifested in efforts to procure passage for them, or remit money—represented by far their most important duty to the "Old Country." This dwarfed any feelings of political obligation they felt to personally fight for Irish freedom. As a result, Fenian ideals motivated very few Irishmen to enter Union service. Though they were always willing to provide vocal and occasional financial support towards those aims, they saw their futures as American ones. The manifestation of this belief, which was broadly held throughout Irish America, is readily apparent in how these servicemen interacted with Ireland.[113] It is in these interactions that the full extent of their relationship with the United States becomes evident. Understanding this identity and this relationship is of foundational importance when considering why some of them were motivated to follow the Stars and Stripes into battle.

[113] That this view was broadly held through Irish America is manifested in the popularity of speakers on topics such as Irish nationalism and the substantial sympathy for the cause of the Fenian Brotherhood, which as noted above had up to 200,000 supporters by 1865. See Brundage, *Irish Nationalists*, 89.

5.4 Motivations for Service

The question of what motivated these men to enlist during the Civil War is one of the most discussed and analysed aspects of Irish American service.[114] Such inquiry has normally set out from the negative stance of supposed Irish under-representation, but as this thesis has sought to demonstrate, this is something that must now be framed and approached from the inverse perspective. As set out above, Fenianism had a relatively modest part to play in inspiring Irish American men to take up arms. Instead the contextualised correspondence points clearly to the dominance of two factors in driving Irish American service—economics and patriotic duty.

Before examining the evidence for these dominant motivators in detail, it is worth recalling the story of John White, related at the outset of this chapter. We can never be sure of precisely what mix of motivations and factors came together to lead individual men to the recruiting officer's desk. While there were many commonalties, every Irish American serviceman was an individual, each with their own set of circumstances and life experiences.[115] The tipping point for Irish American John Slattery's enlistment came when his grandmother left him. In January 1862 the 12th Massachusetts Infantry soldier told her: "if you had stopt at home I would Not be out hear but when you left and all of my best fowl i though it was time for me to leave". [116] In late 1863 Galwegian

[114] This is true of all Civil War service, and it is a topic that continues to see much detailed analyses. See for example McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*; Aaron Sheehan-Dean, *Why Confederates Fought: Family & Nation in Civil War Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

[115] An increasing acknowledgement of the individuality of American Civil War servicemen and the problems inherent in making broad generalisations regarding them has become a strong theme in Civil War soldier studies. As Peter Carmichael points out "no one man can stand for all the experiences in the ranks and no single individual can possibly represent the approximately 2.7 million men who served in the Union forces…There was no common soldier in the Civil War." Carmichael, *Common Soldier*, 12. This breadth of experience has been acknowledged by scholars of the Irish soldier, with Susannah Ural outlining that "the motivations of Irish-American volunteers and their families are as varied as their own communities". See Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 2.

[116] John Slattery to "My Dear Grandmother" 25 January 1862, WC130731.

William Flaherty left his Philadelphia home to travel to New Hampshire and enlist under an alias, having spent the previous year in the Navy. William had chosen to serve under his mother's maiden name, apparently as "he was ashamed to be known as related to his father", an abusive alcoholic who had neglected the family through "continual drunkenness" and who had brought "discredit" on the Flaherty name.[117] In a letter of 31 December 1863 breaking the news of his enlistment, William told his mother that "every time i went in to your home that i was insulted by him i call father i had no place to go…rather than hear my fathers tounge again i would go anywheres".[118]

Kilkenny labourer James Carroll had supposedly spent a significant amount of time in 1861 searching for his wife and child, from whom he had been separated while working away. By the time he re-established contact with them he had joined the army. He explained to his wife that in his sorrow he had "Got into Company" and drank his savings. "I despaired of ever seeing you and heart Broken I enlisted in this Regt."[119] Timing and the hand of fate played a similar role in Irish American Jeremiah Dorgan's path to the 2nd Louisiana Infantry in 1862. The sailor was originally bound for Liverpool when his vessel foundered halfway across the Atlantic. "we were picked up by a steamship and brought back to Boston", he explained to his mother. From there he shipped again, this time for New Orleans, where he enlisted.[120] Irish immigrant Edward Mooney's decision to enlist bears all the hallmarks of a Hobson's choice. The autumn of 1862 found him serving a 25-year-sentence in the Iowa Penitentiary for second-degree murder. He was fortunate that his prison term had been commuted from the death penalty, the fate suffered by his co-accused.[121] On 14 August 1862, "the influence

[117] Affidavit of Ann Leonard and Mary Leonard 5 February 1868, WC117088.
[118] William Flaherty to "Dear mother" 31 December 1863, WC117088.
[119] James Carroll to "Dear Wife" 22 March 1862, WC10231.
[120] Jeremiah Dorgan to "Dear Mother" 12 May 1863, WC130737.
[121] Edward had been found guilty of murdering Charles Wood in Dubuque, Iowa on 9 November 1859. He and his co-accused, Kerry immigrant Daniel Clifford, had supposedly killed Wood for

of his friends and his good conduct" won Edward a pardon, and apparently finding that his "patriotism would not allow him to be idle", he immediately enlisted in the 19th Iowa Infantry.[122] The fact that his pardon post-dated his enlistment by four days suggests that his ardour may have been substantially enhanced by a foreknowledge that a willingness to serve would help secure his release.[123]

As such examples illustrate, when dealing with a quarter of a million individuals there were many different circumstances that could lead any one man into uniform during the American Civil War. Yet while every story was different, the commonalties that played the most important role in bringing these men to their decisions repeatedly shine through. The first of them revolved around economics.

Writing in August 1861, two months after enlisting, John Fitzpatrick of the 19th Illinois Infantry expressed his concern "that times are very hard in the north now on account of trade being stoped".[124] Such descriptions of economic hardship, economic necessity, and economic opportunity are everywhere in the Civil War correspondence of Irish Americans. The former sentiments—those of hardship and want—were particularly prevalent during the war's first 18 months. In September 1861 Thomas McCready of the 74th New York Infantry was informed that his brother-in-law "aint got his place to work" and that another Irish American acquaintance had suffered a "change" of circumstances.[125] January 1862 found fellow Excelsior brigade soldier Michael Carroll telling his brother not to forsake New York for Washington in hopes of

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his money, having first tried to obtain it from him by luring him to a "sink of corruption". Clifford was hanged on 19 October 1860. For details of the murder, trial and sentencing, see *New Oregon Plaindealer* 13 January 1860; *St Charles City Republican Intelligencer* 6 September 1860; *Muscatine Weekly Journal* 26 October 1860; *Buchanan County Guardian* 16 April 1861; *Iowa Transcript* 18 April 1861.

[122] James H. Reynolds, Deputy Warden Iowa Penitentiary to "Mrs Mary Mooney" 11 January 1863, WC84797.

[123] WC84797.

[124] John Fitzpatrick to "Dear Mother" 9 August 1861, WC56115.

[125] Thomas McCready to "Dear mother" 24 September 1861, WC70669.

employment, as "Work is dull all over now".[126] That same month Patrick Dooley of the 40th New York Infantry was informed "there is nothing doing in New York but peeling Potatoes for the Soldiers".[127] In February John Mahon was being told of how "times are so dull" in Hudson.[128] Not much had improved by the following autumn, when James Fitzgerald worried that his mother "Could not rent the house now to much advantage as times are so hard".[129] In Civil War historiography, a disproportionate reliance on the Civil War correspondence of the middle and upper classes has led to the belief that economics played little or no role in the decision-making process of the war's earliest volunteers, and that most of them made financial sacrifices to enlist.[130] Irish American correspondence demonstrates that this was not true for the lower classes who formed the backbone of the Federal military. Regardless of their year of enlistment, economics almost always played a major role in the decision-making process of Irish Americans. It was one of the most significant drivers of their enlistment in the United States military, and doubtless for many it was the deciding factor.

From the first major engagement of the war to the last, there were Irishmen in uniform whose initial impulse to join up had been influenced by financial need, financial opportunity, or both. While this association with "mercenary" service has usually been regarded as evidence of diluted patriotism, it had significantly more to do with societal position and transnational tradition. Few groups were as susceptible to the vagaries of the wartime economy as the urban working class, where a lack of

[126] Michael Carroll to "Dear mother Brothers and Sisters" 22 January 1862, WC40248.
[127] Patrick Dooley to "Dear Mother" 28 January 1862, WC6206.
[128] John Mahon to "Dear Mother" 26 February 1862, WC10604.
[129] James Fitzgerald to "Dear Mother" 28 September 1862, WC23216.
[130] See for example McPherson, *Cause and Comrades*, 5. McPherson asserts "They did not fight for money. The pay was poor and unreliable; the large enlistment bounties received by some Union soldiers late in the war were exceptional; most volunteers and their families made economic sacrifices when they enlisted." For an important counterpoint to this narrative, see Marvel, *Lincoln's Mercenaries.*

employment or rise in inflation was often enough to make consideration of a military career a necessity rather than a choice. The recession created by southern secession had a dramatic impact on employment early in the war, particularly in areas where the Irish predominated. The first calls for volunteers in 1861 came when the Massachusetts shoemaking trade was in the doldrums, Rhode Island textile works were struggling to stay open, and thousands of Philadelphia and New York factory employees had been laid off.[131] In January 1861, the *New York Herald* had been reporting how "the hard times have thrown at least fifteen thousand workingmen out of employment", while that month found the Home Missionary Society in Pennsylvania appealing in the pages of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* for breakfast subscriptions for the poor, whose suffering was "caused in part by so many persons being thrown out of employment, owing to the political crisis".[132] At the same time *The Pilot* in Boston was sharing news with its readers that "the workmen in the shoe towns are generally without employment, and there seems for them a gloomy prospect for the remainder of the winter."[133] In designating 4 January 1861 as a day for humiliation, fasting and prayer throughout the Union on foot of the terrible crisis the country faced, President Buchanan specifically made reference to the fact that "our laboring population are without employment and consequently deprived of the means of earning their bread".[134] While some of the more sensational reporting was driven by political motive, there was no doubt that large swathes of Irish America struggled greatly during this period. In announcing the commencement of a relief fund for the families of volunteers less than two weeks after

[131] Marvel, *Lincoln's Mercenaries*, 36, 56, 58-60. The reports of "hard-times", closures and layoffs were everywhere in northern newspapers in the war's early months.
[132] *New York Herald*, 16 January 1861; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 January 1861.
[133] *Boston Pilot*, 5 January 1861.
[134] The President's Proclamation was printed in numerous papers in January 1861, see e.g. *The Evansville Daily Journal* (Indiana), 4 January 1861, *New York Herald*, 4 January 1861, *Boston Pilot*, 5 January 1861.

Fort Sumter, the New York *Irish American* remarked on these financial straits that applied "with the greatest force" to the "Irish-American portion of the volunteer army":

> Many of them are laboring men and mechanics, upon whose pecuniary condition the dullness of the past six months has operated with the most disastrous effect, leaving them, in too many instances, totally without resources to sustain their families during their absence.[135]

Accustomed to economic hard-times, many Irish Americans were predisposed to look towards what was, by 1861, a long-standing traditional response to such a predicament—military service. Since the 1840s enlistment in the United States Army had become an acceptable remedy to economic difficulty, just as service in the British Army had been since the 1790s.[136] As a result, the soldiering life did not carry the level of opprobrium for Irish Americans that had been attached to it in the immediate antebellum period by many of the native-born. One practical consequence was that when it came to a financial crunch such as that which arrived in late 1860, Irish Americans were less hesitant to see uniform as a potential solution to their problems, a fact which they openly admitted to in their correspondence.

Outlining for his parents why he had joined up in July 1861, shoemaker James O'Herrin explained that he had originally left his home in Waltham, Massachusetts "in search of work" but as he "could not get any" had decided to enlist "rather than be a burden on you".[137] Thomas Doyle told a similar story. During a low moment in 1863 he confided to his wife that his decision to join up in the war's first summer had come when "the times began to look very glumy and dul" and he had not wanted to be

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[135] *New York Irish American* 27 April 1861. Writing more than three decades after the war, Andrew Byrne, a veteran of the pre-war regulars who returned to America from Ireland to fight to preserve the Union, recalled the scene on his 1861 arrival in New York: "Business was very Bad in New York in consequence of the Breaking up of trade between the North and Southt thousands of men were idle yet thousands of emigrants were landing every week in the Castle Garden." Andrew J. Byrne, *Memoir of Andrew J. Byrne: Veteran of the American Civil War*, edited by Nicola Morris (Dublin: Original Writing Ltd., 2008), 97.

[136] See Spiers, "Army Organisation", 335-340.

[137] James O'Herrin to "dear Father" 10 October 1861, WC125192.

"dependen upon anny one for a support".[138] Writing to Ireland in April 1862, Edmund Dwyer believed that "it was nothing but want of employment" that had "compeled" his friend John Hayes to enlist, elaborating that "He has a helpless family and must provide for it in some manner".[139] With unfortunate timing, Irish immigrant John O'Brien landed in America just a few months before the war broke out. It was the summer of 1862 before he finally communicated with his wife and child back in Listowel, Co. Kerry, offering the explanation that when he had first "Come to this Country there was no employment…so I was obliged to join the Navy". Now a United States Marine, he explained that his silence was due to the fact he was "after a Cruise of long twelve months".[140] It was want of employment that had forced Antrim immigrant James Sheren to leave his wife and children in Baltimore and go west in search of opportunities. The stonecutter eventually found a job in Woodford County, Kentucky, "a good place for Work". Writing from there in May 1861, he described being "very onhappy" at not being with his loved ones, but told his wife that he looked forward to his pay, "then I Will see you and the children never agaien to part". But it seems the work dried up, as precisely a month later, and with his family still in Baltimore, James enlisted in the 2nd Kentucky Infantry at Pendleton, Ohio.[141] James McGinness from Co. Cavan did not reveal his motivations for enlisting in the 90th New York Infantry, but in exhorting his brother not to follow him into the army in August 1862, he linked service to economic need: "if Thoˢ has not Enlisted yet I would advise him not to for he will be sory…if he

[138] Thomas Doyle to "My Dearest Margaret" 12 March 1863, WC27522.
[139] Edmund Dwyer to "My Dear Father" 6 April 1862, WC132012.
[140] John O'Brien to "My Dr Wife" 4 June 1862 in Navy WC18084.
[141] James Sheren to "Dear Wife" 6 May 1861 and Affidavit of Maria Sherden 15 October 1863, both in WC11095. The file is recorded under the name "Sheriden" as it was one of the ways in which James's surname was recorded in the military.

knew as much about Soldiering as I do he would never want to Enlist if he had to go to the Poor House".[142]

Even when the war economy was in full flight, the improving situation did not always rise all Irish American boats, and many servicemen made consistent references to "hard times" during the course of the conflict. Difficulties in procuring employment persisted as a reason for enlistment, particularly in the West. When farm labourer Cornelius O'Brien enlisted in February 1864 from Oquawka, Illinois, he put it down to the fact that "there was nothing for me to do".[143] Similar concerns were expressed by Pat Scannell, who became a member of the 1st New Hampshire Cavalry in the dying days of the war. "I am not Sorry that I enlisted I dont See what else I could do", he told his mother in April 1865. "Pay off your debts get in Something for the Summer let my Sisters have some clothes money and what there is Left lay it by for a wet day", he advised her.[144]

The hardships that secession wrought on employment were not restricted to the Irish American working class. Its impact was also felt by those in better circumstances, giving them pause to consider the potential economic positives of service. When 1861 dawned the decidedly middle-class John C. Lynch had been a clerk at De Forest, Armstrong & Co., a New York dry goods house that dealt "exclusively in the Southern trade". When it went under at the end of January with liabilities in excess of $2,000,0000, it threw his financial future into doubt.[145] One year later John was a Captain in the Irish Brigade, outlining for his mother why his decision to remain in the army was "for the best": "I did not think we had enough of money saved to enter into

[142] James McGinness to "Dear Mother" 8 August 1862, WC1694.
[143] Cornelius O'Brien to "Dear Mother" 19 February [no date, but 1864], WC84143.
[144] Pat Scannell to "Dear mother" 10 April [1865], WC62659.
[145] Affidavit of Charles L. Rabitte and Thomas Mullen 13 September 1866, WC94532; *Hartford Daily Courant* 31 January 1861.

business which will not be the case in a Couple of Months from now when I will have 3 or 4 hundred dollars to add to the little pile".[146]

While the advent of significant bounties for service from 1863 onwards are often regarded as heralding a sea-change with respect to motivation, in reality there were many tempting financial inducements on offer for the hard-up working-class man of 1861 and 1862. Charles McKenna, whose family were pre-Famine immigrants from Tyrone, enlisted in the 2nd Rhode Island Cavalry on 20 October 1862. It was a decision that enabled him to pass a $375 lump sum to his father, the equivalent of 15 months of the maximum pay he had earned at the Dunnell Print Works of Pawtucket.[147] One of the most attractive incentives offered in the early war period was the prospect of land. "they pay us 11 Dollars and keep the other two for to have a fund to give each of us when we are discharged besides 100 Dollars Bounty and a grant of 100 acres of land", the 17th Massachusetts Infantry's James O'Herrin informed his father in 1861.[148] James Carroll of the 42nd New York Infantry had also been promised "100 Acres of land at the Close of the War", which he assured his wife she would receive should he die.[149] Similarly, John Kennedy of the 10th Ohio Infantry promised his mother that "when he came back from the Army, they would have a nice little farm."[150] These early war monetary opportunities proved more than sufficient to draw Irish immigrants into the United States from abroad. Finding that he had "difficulty…in securing steady and constant employment" in Montreal, 18-year-old Irish immigrant Frederick Nightingale crossed the border to join the ranks of the 118th New York Infantry in August 1862. There he

[146] John. C. Lynch to "My Own darling Mother" no date [but c. April 1862], WC94532.
[147] Affidavit of Daniel McKenna and John McKenna 1 October 1868, WC124498.
[148] James O'Herrin to "dear Father" 10 October 1861, WC125192.
[149] James Carroll to "Dear Wife" 22 March 1862,WC10231.
[150] Affidavit of Stephen J. McGroarty 23 July 1866, WC117744.

hoped that his "Pay and other monies" might prove sufficient to support his family back in Canada.[151]

As the war dragged on and financial incentives grew, more and more men in Ireland were attracted by the opportunities on offer in the United States. While folk songs like *Paddy's Lamentation* and cinematic depictions such as those in Martin Scorsese's 2002 *Gangs of New York* have fuelled a belief that hordes of Irish immigrants arrived in America only to be immediately duped into service, it appears that far more left Ireland with the specific intention of enlistment. The potentially life-altering amounts of money on offer had attracted many towards the emigrant boat, a fact reflected in increased immigration figures from Ireland during the war's latter years.[152] Most did so in the hope that in one fell swoop they would earn enough to stake out a future for themselves and their families in the United States. Some had departed even before the sums grew eye-watering, perhaps attracted by the prospect of adventure, or hoping service would provide them with a leg-up in American life. In March 1863, a domestic in Tralee, Co. Kerry wrote to her sister in New York lamenting the fact she had financed her son Jimmy's passage, only "to be the manes of sending him to the war".[153] 19-year-old Dubliner Alexander Scarff landed in New York on 6 November 1862, apparently with the express intention of joining the army. Just twenty-four hours after his arrival in the United States he joined the 174th New York Infantry under the alias Arthur Shaw.[154]

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[151] Affidavit of John Ballard 24 December 1885, WC259125; NYMRA for Frederick Nightingale, 118th New York Infantry, NYSA.

[152] See Chapter One, Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 347.

[153] Unknown to "Dear Sister" 31 March 1863, WC116873. For more on the Madigan experience see Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 83-88.

[154] Across the next seven years Alexander's family sought information on his fate, unaware that he had almost certainly been killed in action in Louisiana during 1863. *Boston Pilot*, 18 April 1863; *Irish American.* 2 April 1870; Ruth-Ann Harris, Donald Jacobs and Emeer O'Keeffe (eds) *Searching for Missing Friends: Irish Immigrant Advertisements Placed in "The Boston Pilot" 1831-1920* (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1989), 186; NYMRA for Arthur Shaw, 174th New York Infantry, NYSA. For more on the case, see Damian Shiels "A 150 Year Old Missing Persons Case- In Search of a 19-Year-Old Irishman", *Irish in the*

Thomas Bowler left his wife and daughter behind in Youghal, Co. Cork in order to travel to Brooklyn, where he joined the 69th New York Infantry under an alias in early 1864. Writing from Brandy Station to let them know of the remittances he had dispatched, he spoke of the "great fighting" he imminently expected to participate in. "I have as good a chance to escape as any other man", he reassured them. He did not escape, and his wife and child remained in Ireland.[155]

In August 1863 James Ryan from Drogheda, Co. Louth enlisted as a substitute for Christopher F. Douglas in Vermont. James had been working in Quebec, where he had been trying to gather together enough money to send to Ireland for his mother, who was then a pauper reliant on the support of her parish. The financial boon of becoming a substitute put him over the top, and he sent directly for her—she landed in Canada that December.[156] Even as men died on the battlefield or succumbed to fatal illness, the monies they earned in service continued to bring new family members across to America. Michael Ryan had left Co. Tipperary for the United States during the war, and on being drafted into the 95th New York Infantry he quickly sent his mother in Ireland $147. When he died in January 1864 that sum together with his remaining bounty and arrears funded her journey to the United States.[157] As noted in Chapter Two, late war recruits like Thomas Bowler, James Ryan and Michael Ryan remain one of the must understudied and denigrated bodies of men to see service during the conflict. Often

American Civil War, (2014), https://irishamericancivilwar.com/2014/04/13/a-150-year-old-missing-persons-case-in-search-of-a-19-year-old-irishman/, accessed 2 June 2020.

[155] Thomas Bowler to "My Dear Ellen" 17 April 1864, WC115828; Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 79-83.

[156] Affidavit of Mary Ryan 9 December 1864, Affidavit of John Hallawell 9 December 1864, and Affidavit of Margaret Smith 9 December 1864, all in WC63566; *Lamoille Newsdealer* 4 June 1863; *Burlington Daily Times* 15 July 1863; Consolidated Lists of Civil War Draft Registrations, NARA; CMSR of James Ryan, Company I, 3rd Vermont Infantry, NARA; Shiels "In Defence of Substitutes: The Story of Mary & James Ryan of Drogheda, Canada & Vermont", *Irish in the American Civil War*, (2020), https://irishamericancivilwar.com/2020/02/18/in-defence-of-substitutes-the-story-of-mary-james-ryan-of-drogheda-canada-vermont/, accessed 3 June 2020.

[157] Affidavit of Thomas Ryan and Bridget Howard 1 October 1866, WC124030.

dismissed as unscrupulous and unreliable mercenaries, close examination of their motives for enlistment indicates that many bear comparison to early war working-class volunteers, in so much as they hoped their service would help to secure the economic future of themselves and their families. Though they may have lacked the same ideological commitment, many of them had very compelling reasons for taking the decision to enlist, and the majority of them did their duty.

The ever-present theme that runs through all these examples, no matter when these men joined up, was economics. While the overwhelming majority of Irish Americans who ended up in uniform due to financial reasons did so of their own volition, the prospect of monetary reward also caused some to be forced into service. Young Limerick immigrant Con Garvin was one such economically exploited recruit. Con suffered from an intellectual disability that in the parlance of the time had seen him branded an "idiot". Impressionable and easily-led, his mother had ultimately been forced to have him placed in the Rensselaer House of Industry in Troy, New York. When there, the Superintendent and an officer of the 52nd New York Infantry colluded to steal Con away and enlist him in the regiment under a pseudonym. The incident sparked a long and high-profile saga that reached as high as Abraham Lincoln, as Con's mother Catharine embarked on an ultimately fruitless mission to retrieve her abducted boy.[158] Dubliner Thomas Burke was another of those forced into the army through the machinations of an unscrupulous bounty broker. He had been signed up in Ireland by a Patrick Finney, ostensibly to work on American railroads, but on arrival in Portland, Maine, he was one of a number who were imprisoned until they consented to enlist. Before his release could be secured, Thomas was killed in the ranks of the 20th Maine

[158] For a detailed accounting of the Con Garvin case, see Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 18-30; WC78263.

Infantry at The Wilderness.[159] Alcohol was often a common denominator in ploys to dupe or cheat these men, and invariably the perpetrator, or at least the victim's initial contact, was a fellow Irishman. John Daly had been among those who left Ireland in late 1863 or early 1864 in the hope that the American wartime economy would provide himself and his family with the means for a new start. He may well have left with the express intention of joining the army, but either way, soon after landing he ran afoul of his unscrupulous host, Thomas Donnellan. As a Private in the 51st New York Infantry, John later explained to his wife how Donnellan and his son had "drugged me day and night with the worst of spirits and other mixtures and then he thought to rob me of 100 dollars and more" before causing him to have to serve under an alias, as "that Robber Donnellan gave in my name as Ryan".[160]

It is no surprise that financial and economic considerations were a vital element in bringing so many working-class men into Federal uniform. But while the motivations of specific men can sometimes appear glaringly obvious, appearances can be deceptive. In truth, there was rarely a simplistic, single reason behind why men donned Union blue. In most instances, a cocktail of contributary elements came together to form the basis

[159] WC57059. For an account of the incident and its aftermath see Eugene H. Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service and the American Civil War* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky 1994), 155-61. On Finney's actions in Ireland see Damian Shiels "'Watch the Man's Movements': Illegal Recruitment for the Union in Ireland, Part One", *Irish in the American Civil War*, (2013), https://irishamericancivilwar.com/2013/04/03/watch-the-mans-movements-illegal-recruitment-for-the-union-in-ireland-part-one/, accessed 21 June 2020. The topic of illegal and forced recruitment is touched on by a number of scholars, see for example Hernon, *Celts, Catholics & Copperheads*; Robert L. Peterson and John A. Hudson, "Foreign Recruitment for Union Forces" *Civil War History* 7:2 (1961), 176-189. For a detailed examination of a number of specific cases in New York, see Brendan Hamilton and Damian Shiels "Recruited Straight Off The Boat? On the Trail of Emigrant Soldiers From the Ship Great Western", *Irish in the American Civil War* (2015), https://irishamericancivilwar.com/2015/10/01/recruited-straight-off-the-boat-on-the-trail-of-emigrant-soldiers-from-the-ship-great-western/, accessed 25 June 2020; Brendan Hamilton and Damian Shiels ""It Was Not For To Be Soldiers We Came Out": Recruited Straight Off The Boat-Some New Evidence," 2019, *Irish in the American Civil War* (2019), https://irishamericancivilwar.com/2019/01/12/it-was-not-for-to-be-soldiers-we-came-out-recruited-straight-off-the-boat-some-new-evidence/, accessed 25 June 2020.

[160] John Daly to "My dear Wife" 23 September 1864, WC126148. For more on the Daly family story see Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 93-98.

for their ultimate decision. Patrick Delanty serves as a case in point. There were few Irish Americans who appear to so readily fit the mould of the economically motivated early war volunteer than the USS *Carondelet* sailor. The Laois native had been working in Cairo, Illinois during the conflict's early months, until a dispute with his employer over working hours and poor wages left him searching for a new position. To compound his problems, Patrick's remaining money was then stolen from his carpet bag, leaving him "without a cent". He "waited three days for a situation" in Cairo—a town he regarded as a "Mean Hole"—before deciding to join the navy. It was in the service that he finally found something he enjoyed. It provided him with "a good time", "not much to do" and "a good table to Sit at". Though his mother wanted him back in Chicago, he was reluctant to return to a place where he "would have to lay around and couldnt get a situation".[161] In any case, he felt his rewards would quickly come. "my opinin is that we have done all our fighting", Patrick wrote in the summer of 1862, as he looked forward to an honourable discharge, his bounty of $100, and the prize money he was due from vessels captured at Island No. 10.[162]

Patrick Delanty's own words demonstrate how centrally important economics had been in his decision to enlist. But despite appearances, it was not all that moved him. Like many other Irish Americans, he appears to have been possessed of a sincere hope that his time in uniform would improve him as a man, and, just as importantly, improve how others perceived him as a man. Rather than being borne of a reflexive reaction to nativism and a desire to be accepted by American society, in many instances these sentiments seem to have been intimately and intensely personal. As discussed in Chapter Four, these men wanted to see themselves—and to be seen—as individuals of

[161] Patrick Delanty to "My Dear Mother & Sisters" 17 February 1862, Navy WC2163. Based on his letter, Patrick was likely working for English-born merchant Henry Winter in Cairo. See 1860 U.S. Census, Cairo, Alexander, Illinois, NARA.
[162] Patrick Delanty to "My Dear Mother & Sisters" 1 June 1862, Navy WC2163.

good character, as men who provided for their families, as men who did their duty. Military service seemed to offer these potential rewards in a way that working-class civilian life sometimes could not. It could also offer societal empowerment to men like Patrick Delanty, often for the first time in their lives. “I am glad the are drafting now”, he wrote in August 1862, “now the loafers will have to Come and tri their hand at Soldering or Sailoring”. He could now look down on those who had seen themselves as his betters, those men who “puts on So many airs around town with their good Cloaths” and who had looked at "a defender of their Country with Contempt”.[163]

Along with all the other reasons that lay behind his enlistment, once Patrick Delanty became a Union sailor he came to view himself as a defender of his Country. Even though he had been born in Laois, his personal ambition, his sense of identity, and his sense of allegiance were intrinsically tied to his future as an Irishman in the United States. In such sentiments are found the only motivators that compete with economics for prominence in the Civil War writings of working-class Irish Americans—a sense of duty and patriotism towards America.

It is apparent that thousands of Irish Americans donned Federal uniform because they felt a profound sense of responsibility towards the United States of America, and they took pride in the fact that they were in uniform fighting for its survival. Typical of them was Tommy Welch, the 20th Maine Infantry soldier who would later be recalled for his “most laughable blunders” and “bewildered, serio-comic gravity of expression” by former comrade Theodore Gerrish.[164] “Uncle Tommy” was in his late thirties when he went off to war with the 20th Maine Infantry in August 1862. Prior to joining up he had been supporting his elderly parents in Bangor, Maine through seasonal log rafting on

[163] Patrick Delanty to “My Dear Mother and Sisters” 11 August 1862, Navy WC2163.
[164] See Chapter Four. Gerrish, *Army Life*, 42-43.

New Brunswick's Nashwaak River. He hoped his steady army wage would help towards that burden, but as with Patrick Delanty, economics were not his only consideration. In an understated letter to his brother penned after his first full engagement at Fredericksburg, Tommy admitted there had been "trouble and trials", but continued: "I bear them willingly and more Because the Flag that has given protection to persecuted Country men".[165] As Tommy Welch saw it, the United States had given him and his family a home, and in exchange, he was willing to lay down his life for it.

Many Irish Americans provided glimpses of their patriotic inclinations in more subtle fashion. When young Irish American John Sullivan lied about his age in January 1862 to enlist in the 102nd New York Infantry, he ostensibly did so to help his mother, as the wages were "much better than I could do at home".[166] But when she immediately asked him to leave the military, John refused. In his response John returned to his economic argument, but also hinted at the pride and duty he felt on having now committed to the army, something he was unwilling to forgo: "in regard to my coming home I never can as I have been sworn in and received my uniform".[167] Kerry immigrant William Harnett of the 4th United States Infantry told his family that "if the worst should come I will only share the fate of many better men."[168] Such understated determination to see the war settled in favour of the Union is also apparent in the correspondence of Irish American Michael McCormick. Serving during the 1862 Peninsula Campaign, the 65th New York Infantryman expressed his confidence in nearing victory, but quickly added that he was in no hurry to go home. "I do not want to go home until this war is over then I would be satisfied but not before."[169] Clare immigrant Martin Noonan of the 64th New

[165] Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 139-140. Thomas Welch to "Dear Brother" 26? January 1863, WC141783.
[166] John Sullivan to "Dear Mother" 13 January 1862, WC12866.
[167] John Sullivan to "Dear Mother" 30 January 1862, WC12866.
[168] William Harnett to "Dear Mother" 3 May 1862, WC20688.
[169] Michael McCormick to "Dear Mother" 19 June 1862, WC96255.

York Infantry was more outspoken. For his part, he looked forward to the day when "we will be planting the poles for the glorious Stars and Stripes to wave over the Continant from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean".[170]

Among those who had been carried off to war on the early wave of patriotic sentiment was John Lane, whose mother had taken him to Boston following his father's death in Kildorrery, Co. Cork, during "Black '47". The journeyman stonecutter enlisted in June 1861, in circumstances that demonstrate just how enmeshed and inseparable economics and patriotism could be when it came to individual decisions. The 26-year-old's mother later recalled how "for a week or so just before he enlisted, the 'war fever' prevailed, and he became unsteady and did not work (business being very dull) and at last he enlisted".[171] John's patriotic sentiments had been stoked at the very moment he was unable to find employment, removing a major potential impediment in his deliberations. Rather than having to carefully weigh and consider differing options, he found his choices aligned—he could both indulge his 'war fever' and make the soundest economic decision. This co-existence of economic and patriotic motivators is one which repeats itself through much Irish American correspondence, and can be interpreted as a further indication of the adoption of an increasingly American identity—it was after all, the American way to be both patriotic *and* to prosper economically.[172] Michael Carroll is another whose correspondence indicates how economic, patriotic and personal motivators coexisted as pull factors for Irish American men. The Excelsior Brigade

[170] Martin Noonan to "My Dear Sister" 2 March 1862, WC71872.

[171] Affidavit of Michael Holland and John Myres 10 June 1867 and Affidavit of Alice (Elizabeth) Lane 10 June 1867, both in WC121011. CMSR of John Lane, Company A, 12th Massachusetts Infantry, NARA.

[172] A good example of this ideal can be seen in promotion of Union Bonds. See e.g. David K. Thomson, ""Like a Cord through the Whole Country": Union Bonds and Financial Mobilization for Victory", *Journal of the Civil War Era* 6:3 (September 2016), 347-375. However, as J. Matthew Gallman has demonstrated, much of northern society did not take kindly to Irish American efforts to share in the pursuit of patriotic profits. See Gallman, *Defining Duty.*

soldier made frequent economic references in his letters, but also demonstrated his martial enthusiasm, such as when he announced the arrival of the regiment's new rifles, which could "Kill a Secesion a mile and a Half off". [173] Michael saw his service for Union as something to be proud of, and it provided him with an enhanced sense of manhood. He signed off a January 1862 letter as "From your Afection Son Micheal carrol or the Bold Soldier Boy", a reference to a popular Irish American working class ballad that boasted of manly prowess and Irish soldierly pride.[174]

Those Irish Americans who were motivated by support for the cause of the United States were often equally ready to express their desire to defeat Secession. When sending home a Rebel $10 note as a keepsake in early 1862, John Costello remarked on the currency's visual aspects: "the rebel flag is flying on it in all its glory. but it is short lived and will surely die."[175] Writing excitedly to his mother in late 1861, John Kelly from Tipperary opined: "there is no chance for secession now…we have now them hemd in on all quarters…the next news will be that we throw then in to the Potomac & winter in Richmond".[176] Tyrone native Charles Devlin was communicating with his wife and children back in Ireland when he remarked how the European powers would be disappointed if they recognised the "so called southeran Confederacy" as when "thay come here thay will be no such thing as the southern confederacy."[177] Some even turned

[173] Michael Carroll to "Dear mother Brothers and Sisters" 15 December 1861, WC40248.
[174] Michael Carroll to "Dear mother Brothers and Sisters" 28 January 1862, WC40248. For a detailed discussion of the "Bold Soldier Boy" and its place and meaning in Irish American culture and society see Stephen Rohs, ""The Bold Soldier Boy": Performance and Irish Boldness in New York in 1855", *American Studies* 44:1/2 (2003), 157-182. On the importance of song in Irish America, and particularly about what it can tell us regarding Irish American service, see Catherine V. Bateson, "The Culture and Sentiments of Irish American Civil War Songs", (PhD: University of Edinburgh, 2018). For a similar analysis that covers a century of Irish America, see Dan Milner, *The Unstoppable Irish: Songs and Integration of the New York Irish, 1783-1883* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019).
[175] John Costello to "Dear Sister" 21 April 1862, WC58007.
[176] John Kelly to "Dear Mother" 22 November 1861, WC26080.
[177] Charles Devlin to "Dear Wife and Children" 9 March 1862, WC161452. For more on the Devlin family story see Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 174-186.

towards lyrical expression. Each of the nine verses that Louth immigrant John Buckley of USS *Flag* sent his sister in 1863 concluded with the refrain "To conquer the confederacy, And cause its overthrow."[178] Irish immigrant Timothy Dougherty of the 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry had been fated to go west and face Native Americans rather than Confederates, but he left no doubt as to how brightly his convictions burned, and how willing he was to test those convictions on those whom he deemed Rebel sympathisers:

> …we are expecting to go home this Winter the Coperhead might as well be in hell as to abuse the Soldiers whin will they go home this Winter for I am going cary A pair of Revovers home with me this Winter[179]

Neither was an ideological investment in the outcome of the conflict the preserve of the early war volunteer. Late 1863 recruit John Deegan of the 19th Maine Infantry informed his sister in 1864 that while he expected hard times after the war, they were "nothing to what they will be should this war be settled unsatisfactory to our government".[180] Nicholas Mahar, another late war enlistee, left no doubt as to the extent to which he regarded the Confederates as both an enemy and as "other". In the summer of 1864 he sent his sister a macabre war trophy: "i sent kate a ring the 12 it is as niCe one i will send you one in ths letter tha ar maid out of rebs bons i mad them".[181]

Further demonstration of the significance Irish Americans placed on fighting for the Union can be gleaned from the words they chose when communicating a comrade's death to the bereaved. In his letter to the wife of fallen Irish Brigade soldier Patrick Dunnigan, recent Waterford immigrant Captain Patrick Clooney referenced "his last

[178] John Buckley "Greeting Home"[no date] 1863, Navy WC4219.
[179] Timothy Dougherty to "Dear Mother" 19 December 1864, WC115555.
[180] John Deegan to "Sister Kate" 28 April 1864, WC68309. Perhaps the most notable example of an Irish American who was not among the first rush to war but who was nonetheless strongly devoted to Union was Peter Welsh of the 28th Massachusetts Infantry. His enlistment in September 1862 came after a drinking spree in which he had spent all his money. See Kohl and Richard (ed), *Irish Green and Union Blue*.
[181] Nicholas Mahar to "Dear sister" 13 June 1864, WC107142.

noble efforts beside the flags of his native and adopted fatherland".[182] After another Irish Brigade soldier's death at Antietam, Sergeant William Loughran informed the man's widow that he fell: "fighting in Defence of the Constution and Laws". Loughran would die for the same cause just over two months later at Fredericksburg.[183] After John Feeney fell in the ranks of Corcoran's Irish Legion, Captain Edward Byrne offered his mother the consolation that "he done his duty twards god and his Country".[184]

The patriotic motivation of Irish American servicemen could be particularly strong among those tens of thousands who, though technically "recent immigrants", had grown to adulthood in the United States. One of them was 21-year-old Cavan immigrant Mike Brady, who by August 1862 had been selected to carry the 75th Ohio Infantry's National Color. Mike had left Ireland as a boy, departing with his father following his mother's death in the midst of the Great Famine. He had earned his right to carry the Stars and Stripes at the Battle of McDowell, leaping from cover in order to save the banner as it tumbled towards the Confederate line. Mortally wounded a few weeks later as he defiantly waved the flag at Rebels decimating his regiment during Second Bull Run, he reportedly pronounced on his deathbed: "welcome be the will of God I couldnot loose my life in a better cause".[185] Throughout his brief service, his devotion to the United States had been absolute.

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[182] Patrick Clooney to "Mrs Dunigan" 2 June 1862, WC954.
[183] William Loughran to "Mrs Tye" 7 October 1862, WC51891; WC26018.
[184] Edward Byrne to "Mrs Feeney" 29 May 1863, WC23343.
[185] Ohio Roster Commission, *Official Roster of the Soldiers of the State of Ohio in the War of the Rebellion 1861-1866*, volume 6 (Akron: General Assembly 1888), 210; Affidavit of William Brogan and Michael Curran 23 January 1868, WC107715; Whitelaw Reid, *Ohio in the War: Her Statesmen, Her Generals, And Soldiers*, volume 2 (Cincinnati: Moore, Wilstach & Baldwin, 1868), 434-435; Scott C. Patchan, *Second Manassas: Longstreet's Attack and the Struggle for Chinn Ridge* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books 2011), 67-68; John J. Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run: The Battle and Campaign of Second Manassas* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press 1999), 381-396. C.R. Bigalow to "Mr. Brady" 24 September 1862, WC107715.

It is evident that the factors that drew most Irish Americans into uniform were economic necessity and opportunity, and a sense of patriotism and duty towards the United States. These far outstripped any other major motivators. Despite the connotations often associated with men who joined the military primarily for money, the fact was they were an ever-present in Union uniform, from Bull Run to Appomattox. The realities of working class life in America, particularly for the urban poor, made such service a necessity for thousands. Many of them, both early and late war recruits, were motivated by concerns every bit as laudable as the ideological volunteer—a desire to provide for their families. Nonetheless, economics rarely acted as a sole pull factor, especially early in the war. There were undoubtedly some who hoped service might finally overcome native prejudice and see the Irish become more accepted in the United States. There were others who may have seen their service primarily as a means of advancing a distinctly Irish nationalist agenda. But of all, the degree to which ordinary working-class Irish Americans were motivated to fight for the preservation of the Union of the United States has been the most underestimated.

The often understated and matter-of-fact way in which Irish Americans expressed their determination to do their duty by their country suggests that it was not something they regarded as requiring regular overt pronouncement; it was a job—a duty—that needed to be done. Working-class Irish American men tended to view war and combat in such practical terms, and were not as quick to articulate the more idealised perspectives of conflict common among the upper classes. That did not mean they did not appreciate the stakes. For those who were more recent immigrants, and regardless of their personal circumstances, it was readily apparent that the voice, power and favour the democratic institutions of the United States could bestow upon them were a world away from what they could hope for in Ireland. If they were to maintain their hopes of continuing the process of transposing their loved ones to new communities across the

Atlantic, the ongoing strength and integrity of their new country was vital. For the thousands who had spent all or most of their formative years in America, those communities had already become their personal embodiment of what it meant to be American Irish in the United States. All these were things that the Confederacy threatened. As a result, multitudes entered the fray with a deep and sustained commitment to the cause.

One of the most important aspects of these men's contextualised correspondence is the extent to which it reveals the pronounced sense of American community identity that many brought with them into uniform. They were the Rochester Boys, the Pittsburgh Boys, the Salem Boys, albeit most often the Rochester (Irish) Boys, Pittsburgh (Irish) Boys, or Salem (Irish) Boys. But most of them did not regard that ethnic tribalism as being any different from that exhibited by their fellow immigrants, by the privileged Boston Brahmins, by the descendants of the New England Puritans, or by the rural Ohio farmboys. Like those others, they tended to stick with people who they knew, and who knew them, best. Like them, they felt they had a right to their own place within the great and varied milieu that was the American Republic. They were among the latest arrivals, but they felt they had already carved out their position, and demonstrated their commitment. Rather than something that they viewed as facilitating their efforts to "become American", it is apparent that tens of thousands of these men entered into the conflict in the fervent belief that they already were. For such men, enlistment during the Civil War was less of an attempt to prove their worth to the United States, and more of a duty they felt morally obliged to perform. They felt this while realising that many others did not regard them in the same light, and likely while recognising that a long struggle for acceptance lay ahead. Despite all that, many of the 250,000 ethnic Irish who fought for the United States did so in the belief that they were

fighting for their country—every bit as much as their native comrades who touched elbows with them on the battlefield.

Conclusion

Late 1862 found 56-year-old Irish immigrant Mary Dooley making her home in a small tenement apartment at 129 East 11th Street, New York City. She had come to the United States in 1854, leaving her husband and four of her eight children buried in the soil of "the old country". In the years since, she had relied on the support of her eldest surviving son, Patrick, to help her and her youngest daughter make ends meet in their new home. From the late 1850s, he had spent much of his time working as a stonemason on one of New York's major new creations—Central Park. Then, in the summer of 1861 he had enlisted, marching off to war in the ranks of Company C of the 40th New York Infantry. Still, Mary's boy did not forget his responsibilities, and he had made sure to send her money by Adam's Express and to write her regular letters. Mary was illiterate, and as each new piece of correspondence arrived she had to bring it to her tenement neighbour, fellow Irish immigrant Mary Kearney, who read them for her. She had listened as her friend spoke aloud her son's experiences; of reminders of their Clonmel home found in the Virginia landscape, of his pride in the Irish regiments at Malvern Hill, of his efforts to strengthen his religious protection, of his disappointment in the actions of some of his closest friends. In August of 1862, it was also the task of an intermediary to impart the terrible news to Mary that Patrick was dead, taken by Typhoid fever on 10 August, 1862.[1]

Among the scant physical reminders Mary Dooley had left of her son was the small collection of eleven wartime letters she received from him. Despite her illiteracy, she had nevertheless stored them away—it may well have been her or her daughter who bundled them together, carefully punching three holes in the top left corner of each

[1] Affidavit of Mary Dooley 24 September 1862, Affidavit of Mary Kearney, 22 October 1862, Certificate confirming death of Patrick Dooley, General Hospital U.S. Army, Philadelphia, 16 April 1863, all in WC6206.

sheet. The autumn of 1862 was the last time she would ever lay eyes on them. Perhaps she took a moment to leaf through them one final time before gathering them up and making for the door. Her destination was 111 Broadway, and the offices of Nettleton, Gilbert & Camp. The attorneys had been running advertisements in the New York press, which under the banner "PENSIONS AND BOUNTIES" promised to procure and collect monies "for soldiers, sailors and the relatives of such as are deceased".[2] Mary had approached the firm to act as her agent, and over the weeks that followed recounted her story to them a number of times. Sitting before one of the partners, Henry Camp, she told of her journey from Tipperary to America, of her life in New York City, and of what she had now lost on both sides of the Atlantic. When her story was concluded, Mary's attorney requested the supporting information that was necessary to prove her son's financial assistance during his service. Her sentiments as she handed over Patrick's letters for the final time go unrecorded.

The significance of the survival and identification of letters written by men like Patrick Dooley, whose memories of Malvern Hill opened this thesis, are difficult to overstate. But it is worth remembering too that the process by which they came to be preserved must have taken an emotional toll on those, like Mary Dooley, who had been left behind. The fact that they were willing to part with them in such numbers tells its own tale regarding the hardships Irish Americans faced in the mid-nineteenth century United States. But the sacrifice they made in surrendering this material has allowed us to move beyond the words and opinions of the "great men" of Irish America, to recover some of the thoughts, concerns and considerations of the ordinary men and boys who made up the Irish American rank and file. The wealth of background information that the widows and dependent pension files provide on them and their families has

[2] *New York Times* 26 September 1862.

facilitated further crucial contextualisation, allowing for a critical assessment of both their personal circumstances and of what they committed to paper. In combination, these documents have provided the foundations for a bottom-up examination of the Civil War Irish on a scale not previously possible, allowing us to look afresh at the Irish American experience of Union service. That analysis has confirmed some of the existing scholarship, challenged other elements, and added much new detail to our understanding of the common Irish soldier and sailor.

This thesis has argued that a comprehensive analysis of the wartime experiences of Irish American men first requires a significant reframing of how their contribution is defined, analysed and quantified. They were not just the Irish-born, they were also the American, British and Canadian-born children of Irish immigrants. Included amongst them were men like English-native John Corcoran, who saw himself as a "true Son of Earin", and American-native John Slattery, who wished he had enlisted in a regiment with more "Irish fellows" in it.[3] Those who had been born outside the United States were not an undifferentiated mass, they had often vastly different life experiences. They had immigrated at different times—some during, some before and some after the watershed that was the Great Famine—while some had left Ireland as children, some as adults, and some had never even set foot on Ireland's shores. The majority of them who came to wear the blue made their homes in urban America, most in New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. In the main they preferred to live and marry among their own, maintaining an Irish cultural identity through multiple generations. This comfort blanket of cultural familiarity stood to them in service. When Daniel Reddy of the 16th Massachusetts Infantry headed off to war he did so with the (Irish) "woburn boys", while John Gannon of the 26th New York "Slept and eate together" with his

[3] John Corcoran to "Dear parents" 1 August 1862, WC10461; John Slattery to "My Dear Sister" 20 October 1862, WC145128.

Irish comrade John Meehan, and Henry Clark of USS *Niagara* found he wasn't quite so lonesome because of the boys from his mother's "neighbahood".[4]

The context provided by these men's backgrounds signals the necessity of re-evaluating the perspective from which these men are analysed. Irish American communities were one of the most economically disadvantaged groups in the antebellum and Civil War North. This was reflected in the overwhelming working-class makeup of the men who enlisted in the army and navy. These men's social class was every bit as important as their ethnicity in influencing their lives and decisions, if not more so. It was class division that caused Timothy Toomey of the 160th New York to rail against those who "advise poor men to go ought [to war] to See to their families", class precarity that caused the "want of employment" that led John Hayes into the ranks of the 105th New York, and class poverty that had driven the siblings of the 4th New York's John McConnell into charitable care.[5] Too narrow a focus on ethnicity can obscure the importance of class, and can mask the wider opportunities Irish Americans provide as a window into the hard to reach experiences of those from the lower orders who formed the majority in formations like the Army of the Potomac.[6]

This thesis has revealed that the figure of 150,000 soldiers most consistently employed by Civil War historians is too low, not least because it excludes two of the branches that proved most attractive to Irish Americans—the regulars and the navy. At a

[4] Daniel Reddy to "Mrs Murry" 23 June 1864, WC91242; John Meehan to "Mrs Gannon" 27 April 1863, WC105102; Henry Clark to "Dear Mother and Father" 6 November 1863, Navy WC4180.

[5] Timothy Toomey to "My Dear Mother" 30 January 1863, WC46367; Edmund Dwyer to "My Dear Father" 6 April 1862, WC132012; Pat McConnell to "Dr. mother" 1 July 1862, WC109749.

[6] As noted in Chapter Two, Joseph Glatthaar's analysis indicates that men from the lower classes made up 60 percent of the Army of the Potomac, 40 percent of them coming from unskilled occupations. Glatthaar, "A Tale of Two Armies", 329. It may well be the case that the opinions and actions of many Irish American men share much in common with non-ethnic urban poor in Union service. This can only be affirmed when more detailed analysis of those groups is conducted.

minimum, the number of Irish-born men who served in the Union military was closer to 180,000 individuals. It was demonstrated that even the "old" figures for Irish American service have incorrectly been interpreted as evidence of proportionate under-representation, when in fact it is more probable that precisely the reverse was true.[7] When the relatively conservative estimate of 70,000 children of Irish-born parents is added, the true figure for Irish American participation hovers around a quarter of million men. This represents a paradigm-shift in the quantification of the Irish American contribution and has profound interpretive ramifications. Rather than seeking to explain why under-representation occurred, it becomes necessary to address just why so many men enlisted between 1861 and 1865.

The newly recovered ordinary voices of these soldiers and sailors have much to impart. One of the central messages they communicate is the extent to which many aspects of their day-to-day military experience were comparable with other ordinary men in the United States armed forces. Almost every Civil War serviceman would have related to the 9th New York State Militia's Thomas Keating's grumbles about "us Poor solders" and shared in the wearied 1864 sentiments of the 79th Illinois's Barney Carr who was "geting Tired" of the constant fighting and killing.[8] They faced similar challenges in adapting to military life, similar reactions to the ordeal of combat, similar expectations of their comrades, had a similar reliance on their faith, and confronted similar worries and longings regarding the home front. Where contrast lay was in the scale of impediments the average Irish American faced when seeking to successfully navigate these arenas. While some of these challenges were due to their culture and ethnicity, others were a result of their social position. For Catholics, the dearth of

[7] For the main interpretation that these figures constitute an under-representation, see McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 606.

[8] Thomas Keating to "My Deare Mother" 24 January [no date, but 1862], WC88338; Barney Carr to "Dear Parent" 20 June 1864, WC100612.

chaplains made it harder to seek the solace of their religion than for most of their comrades, causing men like the Irish Brigade's John Dougherty to turn to devotional aids as a means of maintaining a close connection to their faith and to "give a feeling of safty in the time of danger".[9] The realities of employment, disease, debility and death in working class Irish America meant a greater proportion of young Irish American men bore financial responsibilities to those at home, like Christopher McGiff of the 119th New York, who swore from the ranks to his mother that "while i have tow hands i will work fore you like a man".[10] These responsibilities brought with them a commensurate increase in worry and stress. For the many whose dependents teetered precariously close to that all too porous line between economic survival and catastrophe, balancing duty towards uniform and duty towards family was appreciably more demanding than it was for many other groups. Even the apparently straightforward but extraordinarily consequential act of written communications could bring its own raft of anxieties, as some men sought a means to have their words committed to paper, and others sought ways to ensure those words could be comprehended by those at home.

Despite their many parallels with the common Civil War soldier and sailor, nineteenth century American society—and many Union officers—ascribed a series of negative traits and character flaws to Irish Americans. These stereotypes were attributed to them due to their cultural and ethnic background as well as their social class and social standing. Most were overblown. While there were Irish Americans who matched the criteria of the roughs and rowdies so despised in the northern military, they were in the minority. The bulk of them were more complex and more restrained individuals than the stereotypes allow. Their cultural and class background contributed to a widespread embrace of drinking, and if there was a spree to be had, Irish Americans would look to

[9] John Dougherty to "Dear Mother" 4 September 1862, WC93207.
[10] Christopher McGiff to "My Dear Mother" 25 April 1863, WC114360.

be at the front of the queue. But they recognised the dangers of prolonged excess, and at any rate, as James Harrigan of the 72nd Pennsylvania explained, alcohol was "hard to be had".[11] And while they appear to have deserted with more regularity than some other groups, there is scant evidence to suggest that the main—or even major—cause of this desertion was ideological in nature. Rather the bulk of the evidence indicates it was driven largely by personal circumstance, most particularly when the economic pressures to which they were more susceptible combined with a period of low morale. Even then, it was most common for Irish Americans to stick to their task at the front, determined, as was Dan Dillon of the 10th Illinois Cavalry, to "go home Deacent or dead".[12] These desertion rates must also be counterbalanced with the often overlooked indications that when it came to the crunch in 1863 and 1864 immigrants, and Irish Americans in particular, proved proportionately more willing to put their lives on the line than the native-born.

Without a doubt, one of the most significant factors that impinged on Irish American morale in the service was the nativism these men faced at the hands of both comrades and officers. The evidence suggests that while it was not shared by everyone, low-level prejudice and micro-aggressions based on ethnic and class stereotypes were commonplace. It was so pernicious that it caused men like Patrick Carraher of the 2nd New York State Militia to fight and die under an assumed name in an effort to escape it.[13] As Steven J. Ramold has revealed, the virulent strain of nativism that often existed within the officer corps meant that Irish Americans also had to reckon with more severe punishments than those meted out to their native comrades.[14] This reality adds another component into the mix when considering issues such as Irish desertion rates. The great

[11] James Harrigan to "My Dear Mother" 1 May 1862, WC3130.
[12] Dan Dillon to "Dear mother" 29 February 1862 [but actually 1863], WC88094.
[13] Affidavit of Francis Carahar 1 September 1868, WC124533.
[14] Ramold, *Baring the Iron Hand*, 37.

salve that served to limit some of these violent excesses, and without which large-scale Irish American service could not have been sustained, was the development of comradery and esprit-de-corps within mixed units. This facilitated the evolution of a working relationship—however tense—and even allowed confirmed nativists like Henry Livermore Abbott to feel a "great pang" when one of his Irish troops fell in battle, and to appreciate the honesty and bravery of those whom he deemed to have done their duty.[15]

Just as the Irish may have been subjected to widespread bigotry, like the great majority of white northerners they were possessed of a great deal of their own when it came to African Americans. Even within an exceptionally racist society, Irish American views on race were particularly entrenched. Scholars such as Noel Ignatiev have sought to explain this racism as a response to anti-Irish discrimination, which caused Irish immigrants to feel a need to prove themselves by "becoming white". David Roediger's analysis sees its origins in more practical terms, as an issue that was primarily inflamed by circumstance and perceived economic threats.[16] But the contextualised correspondence of ordinary Irish American soldiers and sailors suggests that there was little ambiguity in their position. Men like John O'Brien of the 10th Illinois Cavalry moved with such ease from the position of new immigrant to perpetrator of savage racist violence that it suggests white supremacy was a conviction for many long before they left Ireland. That they never held any doubts about their relative superiority to blacks in the United States is evidenced repeatedly in what they wrote about them. To paraphrase Michael Daly of the 7th Illinois Cavalry, they "went in too strong for their

[15] Henry Livermore Abbott to "Mrs. Briody" 17 December 1862, WC9732; Henry Livermore Abbott [no salutation] 18 December 1862, WC11238.

[16] See Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York & London: Routledge, 1995), 2-3; David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, revised edition (London & New York: Verso, 2007), 133-163.

own colour" to countenance any other position.[17] What lay at the heart of the most virulent racial attitudes was not an effort to differentiate themselves from African Americans, but a revulsion that anyone deigned to compare them in the first place, and an anger that a people they deemed to be so evidently inferior could ever threaten their economic wellbeing. Not every Irish American in uniform felt this way, and some moderated their views as the war progressed to adopt a relatively neutral position on the question of race. But most seem to have found confirmation of their prejudice in the condition of the enslaved people they encountered in the South, something that further galvanised their perceptions of superiority.

Irish American views on race were perceived as being closely tied to their adherence to the Democratic Party, whose opposition to emancipation came to be seen as a black mark against them. That opposition was a natural position for Irish Americans to adopt. They were fighting for the white constitutional republic that existed in 1860, not some form of multi-racial democracy that they saw the radicals as advocating. William McIntyre of the 95th Pennsylvania spoke for the majority of Irish Americans in characterising the "Abolition Party" as "a set of hypocrites and defamers of a country's Rights".[18] But the adherence of Irish Americans to the Democratic Party went much further than an alignment on issues of race. For immigrant and urban working-class whites, the Democrats were the natural choice, as they were significantly more open and aligned to their views than the Republicans, who had substantially more anti-Catholic and anti-Irish nativists among their ranks. It was the Democrats who offered Irish Americans a pathway towards political influence so long denied them in Ireland. It is unsurprising then that the Irish tended to be among the party's most constant supporters during the war, and that they often maintained that commitment through the entirety of

[17] Michael Daly to "Dear Brother" 5 March 1863, WC143339.
[18] William McIntyre to "Dear Father & Mother" 30 January 1862 [sic. 1863], WC45770.

the conflict. This was the reason that many of them—men like Irish Brigade veteran volunteer Charles Traynor—were still hoping that "Little M^{c} will be the Man" in the 1864 Presidential election.[19] But their constancy with respect to Democrat support has led to an overemphasis on the degree to which ordinary servicemen sought to abandon the cause following the Emancipation Proclamation.[20] When it came down to it, the majority had stayed, at the very least seeing things through until the expiration of their term of enlistment. Despite their political outlook and racial views, most of those who were politically active likely saw themselves as what Mark E. Neely has termed the "loyal opposition", invested in a desire to preserve the Union that eclipsed their distaste for both the Republican administration and emancipation.[21] That loyalty was often maintained in the face of extreme provocation, such as that recounted by the Irish Brigade's Patrick McCaffrey in September 1864, when he was informed that furloughs would only be available to men who would vote Republican. This was something he was not prepared to do even "if They never Give me a furlough".[22] He made that commitment despite having been seriously wounded at Ream's Station, an injury that had paralysed his left-arm. By the time he was finally discharged on 22 December and returned to his family, he had less than five months to live.[23]

Perhaps the most fundamental question of all with regards to Irish American service is why a quarter of a million of them chose to fight for the United States. They were

[19] Charles Traynor to "My Dear Mother" 1 November 1864, WC88894.
[20] Susannah Ural argues that the advent of the Emancipation Proclamation, coming on the heels of the large Irish American casualties in Virginia and Maryland, caused Irish Americans to "choose between the interests of America and those of Irish America, and many of them would support the latter." Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 81.
[21] See Neely, *Lincoln and the Democrats*, 4. As Christian Samito identifies, Irish Americans "did not necessarily see their opposition to the Republican Party as contradictory to having an American identity." Samito, *Becoming American,* 130.
[22] Patrick McCaffrey to "Dear Margret" 2 September 1864, WC96706. Whether he would have been in any physical condition to travel home to vote even if he had the option to do so is another matter, given he had been wounded on 25 August.
[23] Patrick died from his injures in New York City on 11 May 1865. See WC96706.

among the poorest whites in the North, many were relatively recent immigrants, they opposed the Republican administration and cared little for the fate of African Americans. Yet all the indications are that the major Irish communities in places like New York sent more than their share of men to the front. In that most consequential of states in terms of Irish representation, the Irish-born made up 13 percent of the population in 1860 but contributed 15.16% percent of white volunteers, a figure that does not include the thousands of men who joined the regulars and navy from the Empire State, or the thousands more who had been born outside of Ireland to Irish parents.[24]

The pivotal element in understanding why this was the case lies in how these men perceived themselves. Their identity was far more complex than has previously been recognised. While some may have carried with them the "dual loyalties" that Susannah Ural has identified, the contextualised correspondence of the men in this group paints a different picture.[25] It indicates that cultural and community homogeneity has served to mask the extent to which these men—particularly those who had lived all or much of their lives in the United States—had developed a distinctly American identity. They celebrated American holidays just as they did Irish ones, were interested and invested in the Revolutionary foundations of the nation, esteemed the democratic ideals of the American Republic, and as future USS *Santiago de Cuba* sailor John Crowley put it when he landed in Castle Garden, thought of America as the "finest Country in the world."[26] The continued grafting together of American and Irish identities that characterised this period led them to closely connect their identity with the American towns and cities where they lived. These hybrid communities had created a hybrid

[24] See Table 3, Chapter Two.
[25] See Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 52-54.
[26] John Crowley to "My Dear Tom" 12 May [no year], Navy WC2920.

identity that was concurrently American *and* Irish. This was nowhere more apparent than in the activity that overwhelmingly dominated their interactions with their island of origin—their ceaseless efforts to aid further immigration to America. That in itself was a telling measure of the extent to which they had committed their futures to their new home. As a result of all these factors, and no matter when they arrived on Columbia's shores, most entered the war with the same conviction that recent Sligo immigrant and USS *Wabash* sailor Patrick Finan held—that when they were fighting for the United States, they were fighting "for their country".[27] Hand-in-hand with that came the belief that they owed America their primary fealty, and as a result thousands saw it as their patriotic duty to enlist—and to stay the course once they had.[28]

For those Irish Americans who may not have felt an overwhelming patriotic duty to the United States, there was plenty to entice them into service based around economics. A longstanding focus on the ideological motivations of middle- and upper-class servicemen has obscured the fact that thousands of working-class northerners volunteered for the military in 1861 and 1862 at least in part due to financial need.[29] The contextualised correspondence of Irish American men reveals time and again that the financial incentives for doing so were more than sufficient to attract those in straitened circumstances, particularly given the backdrop of wholesale job losses set in train by the Secession crisis. For men like James O'Herrin of the 17th Massachusetts Infantry, their long trek "in search of work" ultimately ended in Federal uniform.[30] Those early war volunteers for whom economics was a major draw shared far more in

[27] Patrick Finan to "Dear Father" 24 June 1863, Navy WC2867.
[28] Irish Americans shared many of the same concepts of duty as their native comrades. As Peter Carmichael has identified, duty was the watchword of many Civil War veterans, as "it made the job of soldiering sacred while also offering men a degree of latitude in dealing with the dilemmas of army life." See Carmichael, *Common Soldier*, 7.
[29] For an assertion that early war volunteers did not consider money on enlistment, see McPherson, *Cause and Comrades*, 5.
[30] James O'Herrin to "dear Father" 10 October 1861, WC125192.

common with the much-vilified late war recruit than is generally allowed. In the latter's case, their decision to enter the service was often driven by a similar desire to secure the economic stability and future of themselves and their families, such as with James Ryan of the 3rd Vermont Infantry, who in 1863 took the place of Christopher F. Douglas in order to save his mother from an Irish poor house, and gave his life at Spotsylvania's Mule Shoe on 12 May 1864.[31]

When taken together, it is evident that a sense of patriotism and duty towards America and economic considerations far outstripped any other major motivators for Irish American Civil War service. Taken together they also offer an explanation for the sheer scale of the Irish American contribution to the Union war effort, as each of them had the capacity to pull tens of thousands of men towards the colors. Far from being mutually exclusive, patriotic and economic sentiment frequently combined within individuals, such as was the case for John Lane of the 12th Massachusetts, who was struck by the "war fever" just as he "became unsteady and did not [have] work" and with Patrick Delanty of USS *Carondelet*, who joined the navy out of economic necessity, but who came to regard himself as a "defender" of his "Country".[32] For those who were patriotic, it was not driven by a desire to prove themselves, or to become American. These men were already convinced that they were. Rather it sprang from an often intense and sincere desire to preserve their country, manifested through the Union and constitution of the United States.[33] This was something for which many of them

[31] Affidavit of Mary Ryan 9 December 1864, Affidavit of John Hallawell 9 December 1864, and Affidavit of Margaret Smith 9 December 1864, all in WC63566; CMSR of James Ryan, Company I, 3rd Vermont Infantry, NARA;

[32] Affidavit of Alice (Elizabeth) Lane 10 June 1867, WC121011; Patrick Delanty to "My Dear Mother and Sisters" 11 August 1862, Navy WC2163.

[33] The Irish Americans who were ideologically motivated during the Civil War were laying their lives on the line to preserve the Union. For the most important analysis of what Union meant to Civil War soldiers, which closely conforms to the Irish American perspective, see Gallagher, *The Union War.* As William B. Kurtz has noted with respect to Gallagher's arguments, "preserving the Union was of paramount importance to Irish Americans and other Catholic Northerners as well." See William B. Kurtz, "The Union as It Was: Northern Catholics'

were willing to lay down their lives. Writing two years after the war to broadcast the contribution and achievements of the Irish Brigade during the conflict, David Power Conyngham, a journalist who had served with the unit and became its first chronicler, came as close as anyone has to accurately capturing what most patriotically motivated Irish had—and had not—fought for:

> The Irish felt that not only was the safety of the great Republic, the home of their exiled race, at stake, but also, that the great principles of democracy were at issue with the aristocratic doctrines of monarchism. Should the latter prevail, there was no longer any hope for struggling nationalists of the Old World. The Irish soldier did not ask whether the coloured race were better off as bondsmen or freedmen; he was not going to fight for an abstract idea. He felt the safety and welfare of his adopted country and its glorious Constitution was imperilled; he, therefore, willingly threw himself into the breach to sustain the flag that sheltered him when persecuted and exiled from his own country, the laws that protected him, and the country that, like a loving mother, poured forth the richness of her bosom to sustain him.[34]

The Union Irish were a complex and diverse set of men, who served in far greater numbers than has previously been appreciated. Their experience was about much, much more than just their ethnicity and nativity. It was also about poverty, class, culture, and identity, both Irish *and* American. Theirs were ethnically hybrid communities that they viewed as an integral and integrated part of the fabric of their America, even if they were yet to be fully assimilated into others' conceptions of what constituted a true American.[35] Their decisions to enlist were usually driven by economic need or expectation, or by a sense of patriotic duty, and often by both. Their time in uniform was about shared experience and shared expectations, and usually about shared commitment and shared duty. It was about individual actions and decisions dictated

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Conservative Unionism" in Gary W. Gallagher and Elizabeth R. Varon (eds) *New Perspectives on the Union War* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 91.

[34] Conyngham, *Irish Brigade*, iii.

[35] This positioning of Irish identity within the United States is something Christian Samito also identifies, arguing that Irish Americans increasingly viewed their ethnic culture from within an American context. Although Samito sees this as something that grew out of service, which reinforced their ties to American identity and their inclusion as citizens, this thesis argues that for many men it existed beforehand. See Samito, *Becoming American*, 111-112, 119, 133.

more by the practical and personal than by the political. Recovering the voices of these ordinary American Irishmen reveals all this and more about this set of ordinary people who, despite all, made a crucial contribution towards ultimate United States victory in the American Civil War.

Appendix. Military Biographies

The brief biographies below, arranged alphabetically by surname, provide some of the established facts regarding men who are mentioned in the text. The majority formed part of the project corpus or are men referenced in correspondence. The information includes details such as their rank at enlistment, primary pension address, unit of service and fate. The data was compiled from a combination of sources including their widows and dependent pension files, military, ship and regimental records, and census returns.

Barrington Richard

Artificer, 1st Missouri Engineers, Company A. Enlisted 21 January 1864. A farmer when he emigrated from Co. Wexford. Church of Ireland. Pension paid to Cleveland, Ohio. Died 24 May 1865 from inflammation of the pericardium, Alexandria, Virginia.

Barry, Garrett

Private, 3rd Massachusetts Cavalry, Company M. Enlisted 31 December 1861. A single farm labourer born in Massachusetts to Irish immigrant parents. Promoted Sergeant. Pension claimed in East Randolph, Massachusetts. Killed in action near Mansfield, Louisiana, 8 April 1864.

Barry, John

Private, 91st New York Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 17 November 1861. A labourer born in Ireland. Veteran Volunteer. Promoted Corporal. Mustered out with company 3 July 1865. Survived service.

Barry, William

Private, 88th New York Infantry, Company K. Enlisted 13 October 1861. Single. Born in the United States to Irish immigrant parents. Pension paid to Lockport, Niagara, New York. Family were step migrants through Canada. Discharged for disability due to Tuberculosis, 29 April 1862, died 2 May 1862.

Bowler, Thomas

Private, 69th New York Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 26 February 1864. Married labourer from Youghal, Co. Cork, family remained in Ireland. Enlisted under alias Thomas Murphy. Pension paid to Youghal, Co. Cork, Ireland. Missing in action, The Wilderness, Virginia, 7 May 1864.

Boyd, Samuel

Private, 14th New Jersey Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 13 August 1862. Married on day of arrival in the United States in 1851. Born in Co. Antrim. Pension paid to Norristown, Pennsylvania. Killed in action, Cold Harbor, Virginia, 1 June 1864.

Boyle, John

Private, 38th New York Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 15 June 1861. Single, likely born in the United States (Maine), parents Irish immigrants. Pension paid to Oldtown, Maine. Killed in action, Chantilly, Virginia 1 September 1862.

Boyle, Robert

First Lieutenant, 164th New York Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 18 September 1862. A married cooper from Co. Armagh. Presbyterian. Pension paid to Lockport, New York. Died in Libby Prison on 1 July 1864 from wounds received in action at Cold Harbor, Virginia on 3 June 1864.

Brady, Michael

Private, 75th Ohio Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 30 December 1861. A single blacksmith born in Co. Cavan. Pension paid to Newark, New Jersey. Died 9 September 1862 in Alexandria, Virginia from wounds received at Second Bull Run, Virginia on 30 August 1862.

Brennan, John

Private, 11th Massachusetts Infantry, Company H. A married labourer from Monasterevin, Co. Kildare. Former British Army soldier. Served under the alias John Burns. Pension paid to Salem, Massachusetts. Killed in action, Williamsburg, Virginia, 5 May 1862.

Briody, James

Private, 20th Massachusetts Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 11 August 1862. Single, stonecutter by trade, but different occupations listed in affidavits compared to service record. Born in the United States to Irish immigrant parents from Castlerahan, Co. Meath. Pension paid to North Andover, Massachusetts. Killed in action, Fredericksburg, Virginia, 11 December 1862.

Buckley, John

Seaman, USS *Weehawken.* Assigned New York. Enlisted 1 June 1862. Single. A comb-maker from Co. Louth. Living in New York City's 21st Ward in 1860. Pension paid to Mount Vernon, New York. Drowned when USS *Weehawken* sank at anchor off Morris Island, South Carolina, 6 December 1863.

Burke, Thomas

Private, 20th Maine Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 10 March 1864. Married, a native of Dublin. Recruited in Ireland ostensibly to undertake non-military employment, and forced to join the military on arrival in America. Pension paid to Dublin, Ireland. The British consulate was in the process of attempting his extraction from service when he was killed in action at The Wilderness, Virginia 8 May 1864.

Burns, Felix

Private, 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry, Company E. Enlisted 16 January 1862. Single. A glassworker, born in the United States to Irish parents. Pension claimed in Birmingham, Pennsylvania. Died in Falmouth, Virginia on 28 May 1864 as a result of a wound received in the abdomen, while serving as a Sergeant.

Burns, Henry

Private, 59th New York Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 19 August 1861. A single labourer, born in Ireland. Pension claimed in New York City. Wounded in action, Petersburg, Virginia 22 June 1864 and died of wounds in Washington D.C., 6 July 1864.

Burns, James

Seaman, USS *Colorado*. Assigned Maine. Enlisted 22 September 1864. Single. A seaman by trade, born in Ireland. Served under alias George Lacey. Family step-migrated through Canada. Pension claimed in Lewiston, Maine. Died of consumption, U.S. Naval Hospital, New York, 15 August 1865.

Butler, Michael

Private, 4th Maine Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 3 December 1861. Born in Ireland. Absent sick, 1 July 1863. Transferred to 19th Maine Infantry. Mustered out 19 July 1864. Survived service. Later an occupant of the Eastern Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Veterans.

Campbell, Peter

Marine, United States Marine Corps. Assigned Pennsylvania. Enlisted 25 July 1862. Single. Employed as a boy in a type foundry. Born in United States to Irish parents. Pension claimed Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is recorded as Sweeny in 1860 census (Philadelphia Ward 1) due to mother's remarriage. Served aboard USS *Alabama*, died of a fever at sea on 29 July 1863.

Carey, James

Ordinary Seaman, USS *Carondelet*. Assigned Pennsylvania. Enlisted 13 August 1861. Single, worked as an Oysterman. Born Ireland on 1860 census (Philadelphia Ward 3), born in United States on naval enlistment. Pension claimed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Killed following the explosion of a mine near Vicksburg, Mississippi, 1 October 1863.

Carey Patrick

Private, 5th New York Heavy Artillery, Company F. Enlisted 18 January 1864. Single. Born in Vermont, almost certainly to Irish parents based on familial associations. Likely underage at enlistment. Pension claimed New York City. Killed in action, Halltown, Virginia, 26 August 1864.

Carney, Patrick

Corporal, 69th Pennsylvania Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 23 August 1861. A single carpenter from Fintona, Co. Tyrone. Pension claimed Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Mortally wounded in action at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, died of wounds 29 July 1863.

Carr, Barney

Private, 79th Illinois Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 19 July 1862. Single. A farm labourer from Co. Derry. Family were assisted emigrants. Recorded as New York born on enlistment. Lived in Salem, Ohio at time of 1860 census. Pension claimed Hudson, New York. Killed in action at Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia, 27 June 1864.

Carr, Thomas

Private, 6th New York Cavalry, Company F. Enlisted 16 December 1863. Married. A printer by trade born in Ireland (possibly Co. Galway). Pension claimed New York City. Killed in action Todd's Tavern, Virginia, 7 May 1864.

Carraher, Patrick

Private, 2nd New York State Militia (82nd New York Infantry), Company A. Enlisted 3 July 1861. Married. A gas fitter from Co. Armagh. Served under the alias John Carrier. Pension claimed New York City. Killed in action, First Bull Run, Virginia, 21 July 1861.

Carroll, Edward

Private, 1st Rhode Island Light Artillery, Company D. Enlisted 4 September 1861. Possibly a printer by occupation. Born in Rhode Island to Irish immigrant parents. Enumerated in Warwick, Rhode Island in 1860. Pension claimed in Providence, Rhode Island. Killed in action, Antietam, Maryland, 17 September 1862.

Carroll, James

Private, 42nd New York Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 28 June 1861. A married labourer who had been born in Co. Kilkenny. Pension claimed New York City. Died of bronchitis, Washington D.C. 24 April 1862.

Carroll, Michael

Private, 72nd New York Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 21 July 1861. Single. A printer, born in Ireland. Pension paid to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Killed in action, Williamsburg, Virginia, 5 May 1862.

Carroll, William (1)

Private, 61st New York Infantry, Company D/Seaman, USS *Mound City*. Enlisted 2 October 1861. Single, born in New York to parents from Dingle, Co. Kerry. Plumber & Gas Fitter. Transferred to Western Gunboat Flotilla on 17 February 1862. Pension claimed in Brooklyn, New York. Killed in action at St. Charles, White River, Arkansas, 17 June 1862.

Carroll, William (2)

Private, 7th Connecticut Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 1 September 1861. Single, born in Ireland. No occupation. Lived in Middletown, Connecticut in 1860, recorded as 13. Veteran Volunteer. Pension paid to Middletown, Connecticut (mother a blind pauper). Captured at Drewry's Bluff, Virginia, 16 May 1864, died a prisoner of war in Camp Lawton, Georgia, *c*. 19 November 1864.

Casey, John

Private, 45th Illinois Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 2 October 1861. Single. Born in the United States to Irish parents. Pension claimed in Galena, Illinois. Killed in action, Shiloh, Tennessee, 7 April 1862.

Casey, John Joseph

Private, 2nd United States Infantry, Company C. Assigned Washington D.C. Enlisted 12 September 1863. A married tailor who had been born in Ireland. In Philadelphia Ward 5 in 1860. Served under alias John Walker. Pension claimed Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Died of Cholera, Louisville, Kentucky, 18 August 1866.

Clark, Henry

First Class Boy, USS *Hartford*. Assigned New York. Enlisted 9 April 1863. Single, no occupation. Born in Co. Dublin. Enumerated in New York City's 17th Ward in 1860. Birthplace recorded as Ireland on naval enlistment, New York on 1860 census. Father had served in 9th New York State Militia. Church of Ireland. Pension claimed New York City. Killed in action, Mobile Bay, Alabama, 5 August 1864.

Cody, William

Corporal, 3rd Rhode Island Heavy Artillery, Company K. Enlisted 5 October 1861. Single. Born in Massachusetts to Irish parents from Cork City. Pension claimed in Providence, Rhode Island. Killed in action, Secessionville, James Island, South Carolina, 16 June 1862.

Coffey, Patrick

Private, 69th New York State Militia, Company D. Enlisted 9 May 1861. A married labourer of Irish nativity. Step migrant through England. Pension claimed New York City. Wounded and captured First Bull Run, 21 July 1861, died a prisoner at Libby Prison, Richmond, 17 August 1861.

Collins, Daniel

Private, 155th New York Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 9 October 1862. Single. Recorded as a labourer and as a messenger. Born in Ireland. Father died in Ireland in 1849. Pension claimed New York City. Died of Typhoid fever contracted following wounding, Washington D.C., 7 July 1864.

Collins, Dick

Private, 10th New York Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 25 August 1864. Substitute for James A. Dumont. A boatman, born in Kingston, Canada, most probably into an Irish family. Mustered out 30 June 1865, survived service.

Collins, Patrick

Private, 6th Maine Infantry, Company F. Enlisted 8 August 1862. Single. Born in New Brunswick, Canada to Irish parents from Co. Donegal. Pension claimed in Houlton, Maine. Wounded at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia, 10 May 1864, died of wounds, Washington D.C., 2 June 1864.

Condon, Garrett

Private, 3rd Massachusetts Cavalry, Company G. Enlisted 13 August 1862. Married. A labourer from Co. Waterford. Pension claimed Lowell, Massachusetts. Captured in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia on 16 August 1864 and died a prisoner of war at Salisbury, North Carolina, 24 December 1864.

Connell, William

Private, 7th Vermont Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 17 December 1861. Single, and by occupation a farmer. Born in Vermont to Irish parents. Lived in Pittsford, Vermont in 1860. Pension claimed in Pittsford, Vermont. Died of fever in New Orleans, Louisiana, 10 August 1862.

Connely, Patrick

Private, 6th Connecticut Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 4 September 1861. A single mechanic, born in Co. Dublin. Pension claimed New Britain, Connecticut. Died of disease of the heart, Beaufort, South Carolina, 20 August 1862.

Conner, James

Private, 2nd Massachusetts Heavy Artillery, Company D. Enlisted 19 August 1863. A married labourer born in Ireland. Recorded in Lowell's 5th Ward in 1860. Was a veteran, having previously enlisted in Company A of the 6th Massachusetts Infantry from 31 August 1862. Pension claimed in Lowell, Massachusetts. Died of heart disease, New Bern, North Carolina, 24 June 1865.

Connerty, Michael

Corporal, 88th New York Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 20 September 1861. Single, born in Ireland, occupation unknown. Pension paid in New York City. A Sergeant at the time of his death. Wounded at Fair Oaks, Virginia, 1 June 1862, died of wounds, Savage Station, Virginia, 4 June 1862.

Conway, John

First Lieutenant, 69th New York Infantry, Company K. Enlisted 25 October 1861. Married, a native of Tullamore, Co. Offaly. A gardener prior to service. Pension claimed in Brooklyn, New York. Killed in action, Antietam, Maryland, 17 September 1862.

Corcoran, James

Private, 5th New York Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 12 July 1864. Married, born in Ireland and of unknown occupation. Pension claimed in Brooklyn, New York. Killed in action, Hatcher's Run, Virginia, 5 February 1865.

Corcoran, John

Private, 2nd Massachusetts Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 25 May 1861. Single. A seaman, born in Yorkshire, England to Irish parents. Pension claimed in Salem, Massachusetts. Killed in action, Cedar Mountain, Virginia, 9 August 1862.

Costello, John

Private, 1st Massachusetts Heavy Artillery, Company F. Enlisted 5 July 1861. Single. A shoemaker born in Massachusetts, almost certainly to Irish parents as evidenced by affiants. Pension claimed in South Danvers, Massachusetts. Wounded in action, Petersburg, Virginia 16 June 1864, died of wounds, City Point, Virginia, 26 June 1864.

Crowley, John (1)

Second Class Fireman, USS *Santiago de Cuba.* Assigned Massachusetts. Enlisted 19 February 1864. A married labourer, born in Ireland. Pension claimed in London, England. Wounded at Fort Fisher, North Carolina. Survived service.

Crowley, John (2)

Private, 3rd New Hampshire Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 26 September 1863. Single. A tinman's apprentice, born in Ireland. Enumerated in Bangor Ward 6 in 1860 working in Randalls Mills. Pension paid in Bangor, Maine. Killed by explosion of magazine, Fort Fisher, North Carolina, 16 January 1865.

Cullen, Francis

Private, 24th New York Infantry, Company H. Enlisted 17 May 1861. Single. A labourer, born in New York to Irish parents. Pension claimed in Oswego, New York. Wounded at Antietam, Maryland, 17 September 1862, died of wounds at Frederick, Maryland, 14 October 1862.

Curry, Bernard

Private, 182nd New York Infantry/6th United States Cavalry. Enlisted 28 September 1862. A single blacksmith from Co. Tyrone. Recorded as a painter when he enlisted in the regulars in 1866. Pension paid in New York City. Shot and killed when entered a house to search for a murderer, Austin, Texas, 23 August 1868.

Daly, John

Private, 51st New York Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 23 August 1864. A married labourer from Celbridge, Co. Kildare. Family had remained in Ireland. Served under the alias John Ryan. Pension claimed in Celbridge, Co. Kildare. Captured at Poplar Grove Church, Virginia, 30 September 1864, died a prisoner of war, Salisbury, North Carolina, date unknown.

Daly, Michael

Private, 7th Illinois Cavalry, Company A. Enlisted 10 August 1861. A single farm labourer from Galbally, Co. Limerick. Father died in Ireland in 1848. His military record states he was born in Delaware, despite being a recent Irish immigrant. Pension paid in Lockport, New York. Died of dysentery, Port Hudson, Louisiana, 20 July 1863.

Davis, Smith

Private, 65th New York Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 24 September 1861. A married labourer from Ireland. Presbyterian. Lived in New York's 16th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed New York City. Killed in action, Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia, 12 May 1864.

Deasy, John

Private, 20th Massachusetts Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 18 July 1861. A married operative from Co. Cork. Pension claimed in Boston, Massachusetts. Wounded in action at Fredericksburg, Virginia, 11 December 1862, died of wounds, 12 December 1862.

Deegan, John

Private, 19th Maine Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 10 August 1863. Single. A coal weigher, born in Massachusetts to Irish parents from Co. Laois. Lived in Providence's 3rd Ward in 1860. Enlisted under alias John Dixon. Pension paid in Providence, Rhode Island. Killed in action, Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia, 10 May 1864.

Delaney, John

Private, 18th Connecticut Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 17 July 1862. Single. A paper-mill worker from Co. Laois. Lived in Norwich, Connecticut in 1860, recorded as 16-years-old. Pension claimed in Greeneville, Connecticut. Killed in action at Cool Spring, Virginia, 18 July 1864.

Delaney, William

Private, 43rd New York Infantry, Company F. Enlisted 16 September 1861. Single. A native of Philipstown, Co. Offaly, unknown occupation. Pension claimed in Albany, New York. Died of diarrhoea, West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 22 August 1862.

Delanty, Patrick

Landsman? USS *Carondelet/*Marine, United States Marine Corps. Assigned Illinois. Enlisted 1861. Single. A painter from Co. Laois. Father died in Ireland. Emigrated in 1851, United States Marine Corps records list as American born. Pension paid in Chicago, Illinois. Died of heart disease at Union Barracks, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 5 April 1871.

Devlin, Charles

Sergeant, 35th Indiana Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 12 December 1861. Married. Had emigrated from Gortin, Co. Tyrone in 1840s where wife and children still resided at time of the Civil War. Mexican-American War veteran with 2nd Dragoons. Pension claimed in Gortin, Co. Tyrone. Captured at Chickamauga, Georgia, 19 September 1863. Died a prisoner of war at Andersonville, Georgia, 26 July 1864.

Dillon, Dan

Private, 10th Illinois Cavalry, Company D. Enlisted 24 September 1861. A single labourer from Ballyegran, Co. Limerick. Resident in Chicago's 5th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Chicago, Illinois. Killed in action at Bayou Meto, Louisiana, 27 August 1863.

Diver, Thomas

Private, 69th Pennsylvania Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 19 August 1861. Single. A printer, born in Ireland. Resident of Philadelphia's 8th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Mother worked in United States Arsenal. Killed in action, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 3 July 1863.

Doherty, George

Landsman, USS *Horace Beals*. Assigned New York. Enlisted 31 January 1862. A single book binder born in Ireland. Served under alias George Robinson. Promoted Seaman. Pension paid out in Newark, New Jersey. Died of Yellow Fever, Pensacola, Florida, 6 October 1863.

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Donahoe, Cornelius

Private, 16th Massachusetts Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 12 July 1861. A single painter, born in Ireland. Pension paid out in Lowell, Massachusetts. Killed in action, Second Bull Run, Virginia, 29 August 1862.

Dooley, Patrick

Private, 40th New York Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 14 June 1861. Single. A stonecutter from Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. Emigrated 1854. Pension paid in New York City. Died of Typhoid fever, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 10 August 1862.

Dorgan, Jeremiah

Private, 2nd Louisiana Infantry, Company H. Enlisted 19 October 1862. Single. A sailor, born in Maine to Irish immigrant parents. Marked as American born on 1850 Census, as Irish-born on military record. Pension claimed in Ellsworth, Maine. Died of chronic diarrhoea near Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 20 August 1863.

Dougherty, John

Private, 63rd New York Infantry, Company F. Enlisted 20 February 1862. A single day labourer born in Ireland, file states seven years working in a button factory. Lived in Flushing, New York in 1860. Pension paid out in College Point, New York. Killed in action, Antietam, Maryland, 17 September 1862.

Dougherty, Patrick

Coal Heaver, USS *South Carolina*. Assigned Massachusetts. Enlisted 12 June 1862. A single labourer from Co. Donegal. Pension claimed in Boston, Massachusetts. Died of Typhoid fever on board near Tybee Island, Georgia 25 July 1864.

Dowd, James

Private, 63rd New York Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 14 August 1861. A married tailor, born in Ireland. Pension claimed in Boston, Massachusetts. Killed in action, Antietam, Maryland, 17 September 1862.

Doyle, Thomas (1)

Private, 1st Massachusetts Cavalry, Company D. Enlisted 5 August 1862. Single. A farmer (possibly farm labourer) from Borris, Co. Carlow. Father died in Ireland. Pension paid in Concord, Massachusetts. Died on 7 September 1863 at Hartwood, Virginia from inflammation of the peritoneum caused by the kick of his horse.

Doyle, Thomas (2)

Private, 4th Maine Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 15 June 1861. Full name Martin Thomas Doyle, but went by Thomas. A married carpenter born in England into an Irish family. Wife was Irish-born, they were married in London. Lived in Searsport, Maine in 1860. Pension claimed in Searsport, Maine. Wounded at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 2 July 1863, died from wounds 6 July 1863.

Driscoll, Daniel

Landsman, USS *Cincinnati*. Assigned Massachusetts. Enlisted 11 December 1861. Single. A day-labourer from Castletownbere, Co. Cork (but recorded as a seaman on his naval enlistment). Lived in Fall River, Massachusetts in 1860. Pension claimed in Fall River, Massachusetts. Died on 21 August 1863 in Memphis, Tennessee from a disease of the throat contracted after he spent time in the water following the sinking of the *Cincinnati*.

Driscoll, Denis

Seaman, USS *Metacomet*. Assigned New York. Enlisted 19 December 1863. Single. A labourer, born in Ireland. Lived in Erie, Pennsylvania in 1860. Recorded as born in Erie on his naval enlistment, in Ireland on 1860 census. Pension claimed in Erie, Pennsylvania. Survived service but died from disease of the bowels and stomach contracted in the navy on 12 June 1871.

Droney, Mathew

Marine, USS *Miami*. Assigned Pennsylvania. Enlisted 20 October 1862. Married, born in Ireland, unknown occupation. Served under alias Matthew Callahan. Pension claimed in Boston, Massachusetts. His son continued to claim the pension after his widow's death as he was crippled in both feet. Mortally wounded following the explosion of a shell from a rebel battery at Wilcox's Landing, James River, Virginia, 3 August 1864.

Duff, William

Corporal, 10th New York Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 2 May 1861. Single. Born in America, almost certainly to Irish parents. Pension claimed in Brooklyn, New York. Color Sergeant at the time of his mortal wounding at Second Bull Run, Virginia, 30 August 1862. Died 8 September 1862 on board Steamer *Knickerbock*.

Duffey, Patrick

Second Class Fireman, USS *South Carolina*. Assigned Massachusetts. Enlisted 13 June 1862, borne as Duffy. Born in Ireland, no previous employment recorded. Discharged 29 April 1865. Survived service.

Dugan, Patrick

Private, 39th Illinois Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 11 October 1861. Single. A farmer from Co. Cork. Pension paid in Wilmington, Illinois. Killed in action, Darbytown Road, Virginia, 13 October 1864.

Dunnican, Patrick

Private, 32nd Massachusetts Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 7 September 1863. A single blacksmith from Co. Roscommon. Recorded in Milton, Massachusetts in 1860. Pension claimed in Milton, Massachusetts. Killed in action Laurel Hill, Virginia, 8 May 1864.

Dunnigan, Patrick

Private, 88th New York Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 15 October 1861. Married, unknown occupation. Almost certain Irish nativity. Pension claimed Albany, New York. Corporal at time of wounding at Fair Oaks, Virginia, 1 June 1862, died of wounds 2 June 1862.

Dunphey, James

First Class Fireman, USS *South Carolina*. Assigned Massachusetts. Enlisted 3 June 1862. Borne as Dumphy and Dumphry. Born in Ireland. Discharged 4 May 1865. Survived service.

Dwyer, Edmund

Private, 23rd Illinois Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 1 August 1862. Single. A labourer from Boher, Co. Limerick. Pension claimed in Boher, Co. Limerick. Killed in action, Fort Gregg, Petersburg, 2 April 1865.

Dwyer, William

Private, 63rd New York Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 28 October 1861. A single coffee roaster from Co. Tipperary, recorded as a labourer on muster roll. Pension paid out in New York City. Veteran Volunteer. Died of chronic diarrhoea, City Point, Virginia, 12 July 1864.

Eagan, Matthew

Private, 72nd New York Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 21 July 1861. Married. A native of Tralee, Co. Kerry, occupation unknown. Step migrant through Wales. Pension claimed in New York City. Killed in action, Williamsburg, Virginia, 5 May 1862.

Feeney, John

Private, 170th New York Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 10 September 1862. Single. A shoemaker, born in New York to Irish immigrant parents. Pension paid in New York City. Killed in action in a skirmish between Carsville and Suffolk, Virginia, 20 May 1863.

Fenton, John

Private, 90th New York Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 4 September 1861. A single painter from Co. Limerick. Lived in Brooklyn's 6th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Brooklyn, New York. Died of congestive fever, Thibodeaux, Louisiana, 4 October 1863.

Finan, Patrick

Coal Heaver, USS *Wabash*. Assigned New York. Enlisted 29 April 1861. Single. A native of Sligo, Co. Sligo, he had no occupation listed. Recent immigrant, but recorded as having been born in Brooklyn on naval records. Pension claimed in Sligo, Co. Sligo. Accidentally scalded by boilers aboard the *Wabash* off Port Royal, South Carolina on 21 March 1864 while serving as a Second Class Fireman. Died following an effusion of the brain on 6 April 1864.

Finegan, Peter

Private, 116th Pennsylvania Infantry, Company K. Enlisted 29 August 1862. A single wagon-driver who had been born in Ireland. Lived in West Chester, Pennsylvania in 1860. Pension claimed in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Killed in action, Fredericksburg, Virginia, 13 December 1862.

Finigan, James

Private, 4th New York Heavy Artillery, Company E. Enlisted 16 January 1864. Single. A Massachusetts born mason, parents almost certainly Irish immigrants given ethnicity of deponents. Pension claimed in Cohoes, New York. Last seen wounded on the field at Ream's Station, Virginia, 25 August 1864.

Finnerty, James

Private 72nd Illinois Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 15 August 1862. Single. A painter from Co. Galway. Step migrant through England, and also lived in Canada. Pension paid out in Birkenhead, England. Killed in action, Vicksburg, Mississippi, 22 May 1863.

Fitzgerald, James

Private, 53rd Pennsylvania Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 23 October 1861. A single labourer who had been born in Ireland. Pension claimed in Audenried, Pennsylvania. Died of Typhoid fever, Washington D.C., 11 March 1862.

Fitzpatrick, Edward

Private, 10th New Jersey Infantry, Company K. Enlisted 4 November 1864. Married. A factory worker from Co. Laois. Enlisted under alias Edward Honors. Pension paid in Waterbury, Connecticut. Died of Typhoid fever, Alexandria, Virginia, 1 July 1865.

Fitzpatrick, James

Corporal, 8th Illinois Infantry, Company F. Enlisted 25 July 1861. A single carpenter, born in New York to Irish parents. Living in Plattsburgh, New York in 1860. Pension claimed in Plattsburgh, New York. Killed in action 26 June 1863, Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Fitzpatrick, John

Private, 19th Illinois Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 4 June 1861. A single farm labourer, born in England to Irish parents from Co. Waterford. Lived in Douglas, Illinois in 1860. Pension claimed in Cohoes, New York. Died of congestion of the brain, Nashville, Tennessee, 4 September 1862.

Flaherty, William

Private, 6th New Hampshire Infantry, Company K. Enlisted 30 December 1863. Single. A hatter from Co. Galway. Lived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1860. Served under alias William State. Pension paid in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Wounded and missing at The Wilderness, Virginia, 6 May 1864.

Flanagan, Martin

Private, 74th New York Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 20 June 1861. A single gardener. Born in New York to Irish immigrant parents. Lived in Newtown, New York in 1860. Pension claimed in Astoria, New York. Brother also served in regiment, and also died. Sergeant at the time of death at Second Bull Run, Virginia, 29 August 1862.

Flynn, Richard

Private, 117th New York Infantry, Company K. Enlisted 6 August 1862. A single farm labourer born in New York to Irish parents. Lived in Kirkland, New York in 1860. Pension claimed in Clinton, New York. Died on 10 July 1864 in Petersburg, Virginia of wounds received in action.

Foran, Michael

Private, 5th Pennsylvania Reserves, Company C. Enlisted 5 May 1861. Married. Ethnically Irish, and almost certainly of Irish nativity, as wife and affiants Irish-born. Served under alias Miles Ford. Pension claimed in Friendsville, Pennsylvania. Killed in action, White Oak Swamp, Virginia, 30 June 1862.

Ford, Edmund

Private, 8th Kansas Infantry, Company K. Enlisted 24 October 1861. A single labourer from Co. Cork. Paid passage of parents to America. Pension paid in New York City. Killed in action, Chickamauga, Georgia, 19 September 1863.

Galbraith, William

Private, 91st New York Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 15 October 1861. A married labourer from Ireland. Pension claimed in Hudson, New York. Died of dysentery at Pensacola, Florida on 27 September 1862.

Galliven, Patrick

Private, 10th New York Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 5 March 1864. Single. A printer, born in Ireland. Pension paid out in New York City. Accidentally shot and killed near Appomattox Court House, Virginia, 12 April 1865.

Gannon, John

Private, 26th New York Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 4 June 1861. Single. Unknown occupation, a native of Co. Tipperary. Father died in Ireland in 1849. Pension claimed in Evans, New York. Killed in action, Second Bull Run, Virginia, 30 August 1862.

Garvin, Con

Private, 52nd New York Infantry, Company I. Single. A native of Grange, Co. Limerick. Disabled, abducted from the Troy County House and sold into service, apparently under the alias Charles Becker. Pension paid in Troy, New York. Likely mortally wounded at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia, 18 May 1864.

Greaney, Charles

Private, 9th Massachusetts Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 11 June 1861. Single. A boot maker from Castleisland, Co. Kerry. Lived in Hopkinton, Massachusetts in 1860. Pension paid out to Castleisland, Co. Kerry. Killed in action, Gaines' Mill, Virginia, 27 June 1862.

Griffin, Patrick

Private, 6th Independent Battery Massachusetts Light Artillery. Enlisted 23 December 1863 (15th Independent Battery Massachusetts Light Artillery). Single. A labourer from Athlone, Co. Roscommon (the portion of the town west of the River Shannon). Pension claimed in Lowell, Massachusetts. Died 26 June 1865 in New Orleans, Louisiana, following field punishment by his officers.

Grimes, John

Private, 3rd Rhode Island Heavy Artillery, Company K. Enlisted 14 December 1861. Single, unknown occupation. Born in Rhode Island to Irish parents. Enumerated in Providence's 7th Ward in 1860. Pension paid in Providence, Rhode Island. Died of diphtheria, Fort Pulaski, Georgia, 5 March 1864.

Grogan, James

Private, 65th New York Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 1 September 1861. Promoted Sergeant and transferred to Company G, 12 September 1861. Marital status unknown. Upholster, born Ireland. Veteran Volunteer. Mustered out as First Sergeant in 1865. Survived service.

Hagan, Thomas

Private, 15th New York Cavalry, Company E. Enlisted 15 August 1863. Single. A carpenter born in New York to Irish parents, who had emigrated prior to the Famine. Pension claimed in Lockport, New York. Killed in action, Romney, West Virginia, 10 May 1864.

Hall, John

Private, 63rd New York Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 20 January 1864. Likely single. A cooper, born in Ireland. Wounded at Petersburg, Virginia 16 June 1864. Mustered out June 1865, survived service.

Hand, James

Private, 164th New York Infantry, Company H. Enlisted 31 October 1862. Single. Born in New Jersey to Irish parents. Lived in Brooklyn's 2nd Ward in 1860. Brother died while serving aboard USS *Cincinnati*. Pension claimed in Brooklyn, New York. Captured at Ream's Station, Virginia, 25 August 1864 and died a prisoner of war at Salisbury, North Carolina, 1 February 1865.

Hanlin, Edward

Private, 12th New York Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 17 December 1861. Single. A shop assistant. Nativity unknown, file strongly indicates Irish American. Pension paid in New York City. Killed in action, Second Bull Run, Virginia, 30 August 1862.

Harrigan, James

Private, 72nd Pennsylvania Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 10 August 1861. Single. Unknown occupation, born in Pennsylvania to Irish immigrant parents. Pension claimed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Killed in action, Antietam, Maryland, 17 September 1862.

Harrington, Timothy

Ordinary Seaman, USS *Cumberland*. Assigned Massachusetts. Enlisted 11 July 1861. A married labourer who was born in Ireland. Served under the alias Thomas Harrington. Lived in Lawrence's 6th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Hillsborough, New Hampshire. Killed in action 8 May 1862 during the engagement with the CSS *Virginia*, Newport News, Virginia.

Harnett, William

Private, 4th United States Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 16 August 1859. A single labourer from Co. Kerry. Pension claimed in New York City. Killed in action, Antietam, Maryland, 17 September 1862.

Hayes, James

Corporal, 38th Illinois Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 4 August 1861. Single. A labourer from Bandon, Co. Cork. Paid for his mother's passage from Ireland. Pension paid out in Chicago, Illinois. Killed in action, Chickamauga, Georgia, 19 or 20 September 1863.

Hayes, John

Private, 105th New York Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 10 November 1861. Married, unknown occupation. Promoted to Sergeant in March 1862, and Second Lieutenant November 1862. Discharged April 1863, and entered the 22nd New York Cavalry as a private in Company A on 6 November 1863. Deserted at Rochester, New York on 23 December 1863. Survived service.

Healy, James

Private, 9th Massachusetts Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 21 August 1862. Single. A carpenter who had been born in Co. Cork. Nativity Massachusetts on census, Ireland on enlistment. At most 17-years-old at the time he joined up. Lived in Boston's 7th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Boston, Massachusetts. Wounded at The Wilderness, Virginia, 5 May 1864, and died 6 May 1864.

Hennessey, John

Private, 7th New York Heavy Artillery, Company H. Enlisted 30 December 1863. Single. A bartender born in New York to Irish parents (though recorded as a clerk on census). Served under alias John Quinn. Lived in Troy's 8th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Troy, New York. Wounded at Petersburg, Virginia 17 June 1864, died of wounds at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on 18 December 1864.

Henry, James

First Sergeant, 37th New York Infantry, Company F. Enlisted 7 June 1861. Promoted to Second Lieutenant, Company A. A single carpenter from Co. Sligo. Following muster out he joined the ranks of the 11th United States Infantry, Company E. Pension claimed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Killed in action while a Sergeant at Spotsylvania Court House on 12 May 1864.

Hickey, James

Private, 164th New York Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 9 August 1862. Married. A cooper, born in Ireland. Pension claimed in Lockport, New York. Killed in action at Cold Harbor, Virginia, 3 June 1864.

Higgins, Michael

Private, 125th New York Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 7 August 1862. A single moulder who had been born in Ireland (recorded as a book agent on census). Living in Troy's 4th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Troy, New York. Wounded 3 July 1863 at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and died of wounds on 6 July 1863.

Hogg, Farrell

Private, 88th New York Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 22 October 1861. Married, a native of Co. Sligo. His wife remained in Ireland. Occupation unknown. Son also died due to accident while in naval service. Pension claimed in Boyle, Co. Roscommon. Wounded and captured at the Battle of Savage Station, Virginia, 29 June 1862, died following exchange on 16 August 1862.

Horan, Patrick

Private, 67th New York Infantry, Company H. Enlisted 24 June 1861. Single. A day labourer from Co. Galway. Father died in Ireland in 1847. Enumerated in Rochester's 2nd Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Rochester, New York. Wounded at Seven Pines, Virginia, 31 May 1862 and died of wounds at David's Island, New York, 25 June 1862.

Horgan, Denis

Ordinary Seaman, USS *Sachem*. Assigned Massachusetts. Enlisted 23 May 1862. A single cooper and whaler from Shandon, Co. Cork. Recorded as born in New York on enlistment, despite having emigrated in 1857. Lived on Dominick Street, Shandon, Cork City before emigration in 1857. Serving as Acting Master-at-Arms when he contracted malaria during operations on the Atchafalaya and Mississippi Rivers, dying at Brashear City, Louisiana around 18 August 1863.

Hynes, Thomas

Seaman, USS *Cyane*. Assigned Pennsylvania. Enlisted 2 May 1864. Married. A seaman from Co. Dublin. Previous service in East India Company. Pension claimed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Died at Acapulco, Mexico on 6 October 1864 of a haemorrhage of the lungs.

Keating, Thomas

Private, 9th New York State Militia (83rd New York Infantry), Company D. Enlisted 13 September 1861. Single. A book binder born in New York to Irish parents. Pension claimed in New York City. Captured on the march in May 1864 and died a prisoner of war at Andersonville, Georgia, 1 August 1864.

Keenan, Jeremiah

Private, 140th New York Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 30 August 1862. Single, a labourer from Co. Kilkenny. Pension paid in Churchville, New York. Killed in action, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 2 July 1863.

Kellegher, Patrick

Private, 88th New York Infantry, Company D/Landsman, USS *Frolic.* Assigned New York. A married blacksmith who had been born in Ireland. Enlisted in army on 25 February 1864, promoted sergeant. Wounded at The Wilderness, 5 May 1864, deserted from hospital, Washington D.C. 3 June 1864. Enlisted in navy undisclosed date in 1864. Served under alias John Kelly. Pension claimed in New York City. Discharged on 4 February 1871 due to consumption contracted during his post-war naval service and died four years later.

Kelly, Patrick

Private, 28th Massachusetts Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 16 November 1861. Single. A shoemaker from Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. Also recorded as a labourer. Lived in Boston's 7th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Boston, Massachusetts. Promoted Corporal, killed in action while on picket duty at Kelly's Ford, Virginia on 3 December 1863.

Kelly, John (1)

Private, 1st New York Cavalry, Company F. Enlisted 16 August 1861. A single weaver from Co. Tipperary. Pension claimed in Millville, Massachusetts. Wounded in a skirmish at Hagerstown, Maryland and died of wounds (following amputation) on 18 August 1863 in Frederick, Maryland.

Kelly, John (2)

Private, 16th United States Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 26 June 1862. A single farmer (likely farm labourer) born in England to Irish immigrant parents. Pension paid in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Captured at Chickamauga, Georgia, 19 September 1863. Died a prisoner at Andersonville, Georgia, on 5 May 1864.

Kennedy, John

Sergeant, 10th Ohio Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 4 June 1861. Single. A tobacconist from Dunkerrin, Co. Offaly. Pension paid in Cincinnati, Ohio. Killed in action while a Sergeant, Carnifex Ferry (West) Virginia, 10 September 1861.

Kerr, James

Private, 26th Pennsylvania Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 5 May 1861. A married labourer from Co. Tyrone. Pension claimed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Killed in action, Chancellorsville, Virginia, 2 May 1863.

Kinnane, Patrick

Private, 155th New York Infantry, Company K. Enlisted 6 September 1862. Single. A finisher, born in New York to Irish parents. Recorded as a varnisher on census. Responsible for sister's support after their parent's death. Lived in Buffalo's 3rd Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Buffalo, New York. Taken prisoner at Ream's Station, Virginia 25 August 1864. Died a prisoner at Salisbury, North Carolina, 15 December 1864.

Lane, John

Private, 12th Massachusetts Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 26 June 1861. Single, journeyman stonecutter. A native of Kildorrery, Co. Cork. Father died in Ireland in 1847. Pension paid in Boston, Massachusetts. Missing in action, Second Bull Run, Virginia, 30 August 1862.

Larkin, Denis

Private, 6th New York Heavy Artillery, Company H. Enlisted 13 September 1864. Single. A labourer from Co. Galway. Also recorded as a butcher. Served under alias William Collins. Pension claimed in Manchester, New Hampshire. Drowned while on picket duty on the banks of the Appomattox, Virginia, 19 May 1865.

Laverty, Archey

Private, 1st New York Infantry, Company F. Enlisted 3 May 1861. A single upholsterer born in Ireland. Recorded as a waiter on the census. Lived in New York's 21st Ward in 1860. He was an illegitimate child. Pension claimed in New York City. Killed in action, Chancellorsville, Virginia, 2 May 1863.

Leahey, James

Private, 99th New York Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 15 July 1861. Married. An upholsterer from Co. Limerick. Pension paid in Charlestown, Massachusetts. Killed in action while serving aboard the USS *Congress* in the engagement with CSS *Virginia* off Newport News, Virginia, 8 March 1862.

Livingston, James

Sergeant, 155th New York Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 19 September 1862. A single book binder born in Ireland. Recorded as a clerk on military enlistment. Father died in Canada. Pension claimed in New York City. Wounded in action at Cold Harbor, Virginia, 3 June 1863. Died of gangrene 17 June 1864, Washington D.C.

Loughran, William

Sergeant, 88th New York Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 17 September 1861. Married. A policeman of Irish nativity. Lived in New York's 7th Ward in 1860. Pension awarded in New York City. Killed in action at Fredericksburg, Virginia, 13 December 1862.

Lynam, William

Seaman, USS *Hartford*. Assigned Massachusetts. Enlisted 9 December 1861. Also borne as Lyman and Lynan. Born in Massachusetts, likely an Irish American. Mustered out 20 December 1864. Survived service.

Lynch, John (1)

Private, 10th Illinois Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 19 August 1861. Single. A labourer born in Co. Limerick. He had been a railroad labourer in 1850s Ohio, and worked on the Erie Railroad. Pension was paid in Binghampton, New York. Died of Typhoid pneumonia on 5 April 1861 at New Madrid, Missouri.

Lynch, John (2)

Captain, 63rd New York Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 21 August 1861. Single. A clerk, born in Co. Dublin. Pension paid in New York City. Killed in action, Chancellorsville, Virginia, 3 May 1863.

Madden, John

Private, 162nd New York Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 13 October 1862. Single. Employed as a matchmaker, match pedlar and copper and tinsmith. Born in New York to Irish parents. Served under alias John Martin. Pension claimed in Troy, New York. Died off the coast of Florida on 10 July 1864 while aboard a transport en-route to Bermuda Hundred.

Mahar, Nicholas

Private, 16th New York Heavy Artillery, Company M. Enlisted 21 December 1863. A single farmer born in New York to Irish immigrant parents. Pension claimed in Weedsport, New York. Died of disease, City Point, Virginia, 29 April 1865.

Mahon, John

Private, 91st New York Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 6 December 1861. Single. A labourer from Co. Dublin. Enumerated in Hudson's 2nd Ward in 1860. Pension paid to Hudson, New York. Died of Typhoid fever, Key West, Florida, 14 June 1862.

Maroney, William

Captain, 164th New York Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 18 September 1862. A single glassworker from Fethard, Co. Tipperary. Pension paid in Lockport, New York. Wounded in action at Cold Harbor, Virginia 3 June 1864. Died of wounded while a prisoner in Richmond, 20 June 1864.

Martin, Michael

Private, 2nd Massachusetts Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 1 July 1862. Married. A carpenter born in New Brunswick into an Irish family, and who married an Irish immigrant. Lived in Cambridge's 3rd Ward in 1860. Served under alias John Martin. Pension claimed in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Killed in action, Chancellorsville, Virginia, 3 May 1863.

Martin, William

Corporal, 182nd New York Infantry (69th New York State National Guard Artillery), Company K. Enlisted 28 September 1862. Single. A carriage blacksmith who had been born in Co. Cavan. Father died in Ireland in 1840. Promoted Sergeant. Pension paid in New York City. Wounded at Cold Harbor, Virginia, 3 June 1864, died at Divisional Hospital, 4 June 1864.

McCaffrey, Patrick

Private, 69th New York Infantry, Company F. Enlisted 3 February 1864. A married labourer who had been born in Ireland. Pension was awarded in New York City. Wounded at Ream's Station, Virginia, 25 August 1864 and discharged, died from wounds in New York on 11 May 1865.

McCarthy, Thomas

Private, 12th Massachusetts Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 26 June 1861. Single. Born in Massachusetts to parents who had immigrated from Shanbally, Co. Cork. Pension claimed in Boston, Massachusetts. Killed in action, Antietam, Maryland, 17 September 1862.

McCollister, William

Private, 4th Pennsylvania Cavalry, Company B. Enlisted 4 September 1861. A single driver from Co. Antrim. Pension claimed in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Wounded at Gaines' Mill, Virginia 27 June 1862. Transferred to Veteran Reserves Corps. Died from his injuries at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, 4 March 1864.

McConaghy, Joseph

Private, 73rd Pennsylvania Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 20 February 1862. Single. A labourer born in Ireland. Served under the alias Joseph May. Father had abandoned the family in Ireland and remarried in America. Veteran Volunteer. Pension paid in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Killed in action, Peachtree Creek, Georgia, 20 July 1864.

McConnell, Patrick

Private, 4th New York Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 9 November 1861. Single, unknown occupation, born in Ireland. Pension awarded in New York City. Wounded at Antietam, Maryland, 17 September 1862. Died in Baltimore, Maryland on 12 October 1862 following the amputation of his arm.

McCormick, Michael

Private, 65th New York Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 12 September 1861. Single. A brassfounder, born in New York to Irish parents. Enumerated on New York's 10th Ward in 1860. Pension paid out in New York City. Promoted Sergeant. Killed in action, The Wilderness, Virginia, 6 May 1864.

McCourt, Mathew

Private, 1st Michigan Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 15 July 1861. Single, a mason who had been born in New York to immigrant parents from Co. Waterford. Older sister born in Ireland. Lived in Ann Arbor's 3rd Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Wounded and left on the field at Second Bull Run, Virginia, 30 August 1862, and never seen afterwards.

McCready, Thomas

Wagoner, 74th New York Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 1 June 1861. Single. A gardener from Co. Donegal. Step migrants through Scotland. Lived in Flushing, New York in 1860. Pension paid in Brooklyn, New York. Killed in action, Williamsburg, Virginia, 5 May 1862.

McFarland, Terrence

Private, 182nd New York Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 17 October 1862. Single. A stonecutter from Newry, Co. Down. Pension claimed in New York City. Killed in action, Petersburg, Virginia, 16 June 1864.

McGaffigan, James

Private, 63rd New York Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 7 August 1861. Married, unknown occupation. A native of Co. Derry. Was in his 40s at time of enlistment. Pension paid out in New York City. Killed in action, Antietam, Maryland, 17 September 1862.

McGee, James (1)

Private, 132nd New York Infantry, Company F. Enlisted 27 August 1862. Single. A stage driver who was a native of Ireland. Affidavits claim he was a labourer in a soda water manufactory. Pension claimed in New York City. Killed by accidental explosion of torpedoes, Bachelor's Creek, North Carolina, 26 May 1864.

McGee, James (2)

Private, 69th New York Infantry, Company H. Enlisted 22 September 1861. A single baker from Co. Louth. Pension paid in New York City. Killed in action, Antietam, Maryland, 17 September 1862.

McGiff, Christopher

Private, 119th New York Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 31 July 1862. Single. A moulder born in New York, almost certainly to Irish parents. Pension claimed in New York City. Killed in action, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 1 July 1863.

McGillicuddy, John

Private, 173rd New York Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 25 September 1862. A married labourer who had been born in Ireland. Step migrant through England, had married his second wife in Luton. Served under alias John McCarty. Pension claimed in Brooklyn, New York. Died of Typhoid fever, Sandy Hook, Maryland, 7 October 1864.

McGinness, James

Private, 90 New York Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 5 November 1861. Single. A labourer from Co. Cavan. His mother had lost seven children, and came to America in advance of her husband. Pension paid out in Brooklyn, New York. Died of Yellow Fever, Key West, Florida, 1 October 1862.

McGowan, Owen

Landsman, USS *Keystone State*. Assigned Massachusetts. Enlisted 1 August 1862. Single. A porter from Co. Roscommon. Living in Boston's 7th Ward in 1860. Naval record recorded birth as Massachusetts. Pension claimed in Boston, Massachusetts. Scalded to death during an action off Charleston, South Carolina, 31 January 1863.

McHugh, James

Private, 19th United States Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 8 April 1862. A single shoemaker from C. Tyrone. Lived in Houlton, Maine in 1860. Pension paid out in Houlton, Maine. Killed in action, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 2 July 1863.

McIntyre, William

Private, 95th Pennsylvania Infantry, Company H. Enlisted 9 October 1861. Single. An apprentice printer, born in Pennsylvania to Irish immigrant parents. Enumerated in Philadelphia's 9th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Killed in action while a Corporal, Salem Church, Virginia, 3 May 1863.

McLaughlin, Francis

First Lieutenant, 1st Pennsylvania Light Artillery, Company D. Enlisted 5 August 1861. Married. An engineer from Co. Donegal. Pension paid out in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Died of Typhoid fever, Fair Oaks, Virginia, 4 June 1862.

Meehan, John

Private, 26th New York Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 2 May 1861. A tailor, born in Ireland. Captured at Second Bull Run, Virginia, 30 August 1862. Mustered out 28 May 1863. Enlisted as Private, Company F, 14th New York Heavy Artillery, 19 July 1863. Promoted Sergeant, reduced, and deserted at Bedloes Island, New York, 9 October 1864. Survived service.

Meehan, William

Private, 47th New York Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 15 August 1861. Single. A mason, born in New York to Irish parents. His father Michael, a 40-year-old labourer, served and died in the same company. Mother claimed pension for father's service in Brooklyn, New York. William survived his service and was discharged on 15 August 1864.

Molony, James

Private, 31st New York Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 2 May 1861. Born in Ireland. Captured at White Oak Swamp, Virginia, 30 June 1862. Promoted Corporal, reduced to ranks. Mustered out 4 June 1863. Survived service.

Monaghan, Thomas

Private, 95th Pennsylvania Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 9 September 1861. A single plumber and gas fitter born in Pennsylvania to Irish immigrant parents. Lived in Philadelphia's 3rd Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Wounded in action while a Corporal, Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia, 12 May 1864, and died of wounds in Washington D.C., 29 May 1864.

Mooney, Edward

Private, 19th Iowa Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 14 August 1862. A single labourer born in Ireland, serving a 25-year sentence for murder in Iowa State Penitentiary. Pension claimed in Herkimer, New York. Killed in action, Prairie Grove, Arkansas, 7 December 1862.

Moore, John

Private, 91st New York Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 15 October 1861. A single labourer. Recorded as New York born on muster, but as Irish-born on 1860 census. Lived in Hudson's 4th Ward. Veteran Volunteer. Mustered out with company, 3 July 1865. Survived service.

Nightingale, Frederick

Corporal, 118th New York Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 12 August 1862. Single. A printer born in Ireland. Family resident in Canada. Pension claimed in Montreal, Canada. Missing in action, 27 October 1864, Fair Oaks, Virginia.

Noonan, Martin

Private, 64th New York Infantry, Company K. Enlisted 21 September 1861. Single. Unknown occupation, a native of Co. Clare. Pension paid out in Olean, New York. Wounded at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia, 12 May 1864, died of wounds near Fredericksburg, Virginia, *c*. 18 May 1864.

O'Brien, Cornelius

Private, 16th Illinois Infantry, Company F. Enlisted 19 February 1864. Single. A farm-labourer born in England to Irish parents who had been married in London. Pension claimed in La Porte, Indiana. Died of Typhoid fever, Graysville, Georgia, 12 April 1864.

O'Brien, John (1)

Private, 10th Illinois Cavalry, Company F. Enlisted 21 September 1861. A farm labourer from Ladysbridge, Co. Cork. Emigrated 1859. Veteran Volunteer. Mustered out 22 November 1865. Survived service. Subsequent residence New York.

O'Brien, John (2)

Marine, United States Marine Corps. Assigned New York. Enlisted 24 May 1861. A married cooper from Listowel, Co. Kerry. Survived service. Post war pension claimed by wife in Listowel, Co. Kerry.

O'Brien, Patrick

Fireman, USS Clifton. Assigned Massachusetts. Enlisted 27 April 1862. A single labourer from Rosscarbery, Co. Cork. Pension claimed in Rosscarbery, Co. Cork. Captured at Sabine Pass, Texas, 8 September 1863. Died a Confederate prisoner on 3 March 1864.

O'Connell, David

Private, 140th New York Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 29 August 1862. Married. A master blacksmith, born in Ireland. Lived in Riga, New York in 1860. Deserted, no date given. Survived service.

O'Connell, John

Private, 2nd Massachusetts Infantry, Company H. Enlisted 25 May 1861. Single. A weaver from Co. Kerry. Pension paid in Worcester, Massachusetts. Killed in action, Winchester, Virginia, 25 May 1862.

O'Connor, John

Private, 151st New York Infantry, Company K. Enlisted 27 August 1862. A labourer born in New York to Irish parents. Pension claimed in Flatbush, New York. Brother was wounded in the same action in which he was killed. Mother ended up in poorhouse. A Corporal when he was killed in action at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia, 10 May 1864.

O'Donnell, Charles

Marine, United States Marine Corps. Assigned Pennsylvania. Enlisted 22 July 1862. Single. A wood carder from Co. Donegal. Lived in Philadelphia's 24th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Philadelphia. Died of Typhoid fever, Washington D.C., 9 September 1862.

O'Donnell, Hugh

Private, 29th Pennsylvania Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 8 December 1863. A single labourer from Co. Derry. Pension claimed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Wounded at Atlanta, Georgia, 20 July 1864, died of wounds, 30 August 1865, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

O'Herrin, James

Private, 17th Massachusetts Infantry, Company H. Enlisted 21 July 1861. Single. A shoemaker from Co. Cork. Veteran Volunteer. Served under alias Francis Welsh. Pension paid in Waltham, Massachusetts. Died while a prisoner of war at Andersonville, Georgia, 13 May 1864.

O'Keeffe, David

Private, 9th Massachusetts Infantry, Company A. Enlisted 12 August 1862. A married cabinet maker from Co. Cork. Pension claimed in Boston, Massachusetts. Died 23 June 1863, Fairfax Seminary, Virginia, from over exertion on campaign.

O'Neil, Daniel

Marine, United States Marine Corps. Assigned Massachusetts. Enlisted 4 June 1861. Single. A bootmaker born in Pennsylvania to Irish parents. Lived in Randolph, Massachusetts in 1860. Pension claimed in Randolph, Massachusetts. Wounded at Fort Fisher, North Carolina, 15 January 1865, died aboard USS *Minnesota* from wounds, 15 January 1865.

O'Neil, James

Private, 2nd New York Mounted Rifles, Company I. Enlisted 28 September 1863. A single boatman and native of Ireland. Nativity of Irish on census, American on muster. Lived in Lockport, New York in 1860. Pension paid out in Lockport, New York. Killed in action, Petersburg, Virginia, 30 July 1864.

O'Neill, James

Private, 4th Delaware Infantry, Company K. Enlisted 22 August 1862. Single, unknown occupation. Born in Ireland. Served with his brother Daniel. Promoted Corporal and Sergeant. Survived service.

Phalen, Kearn

Private, 11th Connecticut Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 19 September 1862. A married wool carder, who had been born in Ireland. Lived in Naugatuck, Connecticut in 1860. Served under alias Kearn Fitzpatrick. Pension claimed in New Haven, Connecticut. Died of chronic diarrhoea, Point of Rocks, Virginia, 6 September 1864.

Reddy, Daniel

Private, 16th Massachusetts Infantry, Company F. Enlisted 2 July 1861. A single Jappaner born in Ireland. Veteran Volunteer. Promoted Corporal. Transferred to 11th Massachusetts Infantry in July 1864. Survived service.

Reiley, Thomas

Private, 139th New York Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 9 January 1864. Single. A labourer born in New York to Irish immigrant parents. Recorded as Irish-born on military enlistment. Served under alias Thomas McGory. Pension claimed in New York City. Killed in action, Cold Harbor, Virginia, 2 June 1864.

Riley, John

Marine, United States Marine Corps. Assigned Pennsylvania. Enlisted 22 June 1861. A single labourer and son of Irish immigrants. Parents married in Leeds, England. Recorded as both Irish-born and American born. Pension paid in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Killed in action, First Bull Run, Virginia, 21 July 1861.

Ryan, James

Private, 3rd Vermont Infantry, Company I. A single labourer from Drogheda, Co. Louth. Enlisted 19 August 1863, a substitute for Christopher F. Douglas. Mother in Ireland at time of enlistment. Pension claimed in Sherbrooke, Canada. Killed in action, Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia, 12 May 1864.

Ryan, Michael (1)

Private, 3rd Ohio Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 13 June 1861. Married. Unknown occupation, a native of Co. Cork. Pension paid in Chillicothe, Ohio. Died of chronic diarrhoea, Nashville, Tennessee, 20 January 1863.

Ryan, Michael (2)

Private, 95th New York Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 2 September 1863. Single. A native of Co. Tipperary. Father died in Ireland. Left Ireland in April 1862 and was employed as a helper in a blacksmith shop before enlistment. Pension paid in Lynn, Massachusetts. Died of Typhoid fever, Washington D.C., 4 January 1864.

Scarff, Alexander

Private, 174th New York Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 6 November 1862. Single, an Irish-born clerk from Co. Dublin. Served under alias Arthur Shaw. Joined up the day after landing in New York. Killed in action, Kock's Plantation, Louisiana, 13 July 1863.

Scanlan, John

Private, 2nd Michigan Infantry, Company D/Landsman, USS *Mystic*. Enlisted 22 May 1861. A married clerk, either born in Canada to Irish parents or of Irish nativity. Listed as of Canadian birth on naval records, of Irish birth on census. Mustered out of 2nd Michigan Infantry on 11 September 1862. Served under alias Charles Stanley in the navy. Survived service.

Scannell, Pat

Private, 1st New Hampshire Cavalry, Company I. Enlisted 3 April 1865. Single. A porter born in Ireland. Pension paid out in Lowell, Massachusetts. Died of Typhoid fever at Darnestown, Maryland, 18 April 1865.

Scully, John

Private, 9th Massachusetts Infantry, Company F. Enlisted 28 July 1862. Single. A shoemaker born in Nova Scotia to Irish parents. Recorded as Nova Scotian birth on census, Massachusetts birth on military record. Enumerated in Salem's 5th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Salem, Massachusetts. Died while a prisoner at Richmond, Virginia, 15 July 1864.

Sharkey, James

Private, 21st New York Cavalry, Company C. Enlisted 11 August 1863. A single nurseryman, born in New York to Irish immigrant parents. Brother served in 140th New York Infantry. Living in Rochester's 12th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Rochester, New York. Died of Typhoid fever, Washington D.C., 26 October 1863.

Shea, John

Private, 1st Kansas Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 3 June 1861. Single. Unknown occupation, a native of Co. Kerry. Mother in Ireland during service. Pension paid in Worcester, Massachusetts. Died of chronic diarrhoea, Natchez, Mississippi, 3 September 1863.

Shea, William

Private, 23rd Pennsylvania Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 14 August 1861. A single labourer of Irish nativity. Lived in Philadelphia's 9th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Died of wounds received at Cold Harbor, Virginia, 1 June 1864.

Sheedy, Joseph

Private, 28th Massachusetts Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 9 December 1861. Single. A painter from Co. Limerick. Also recorded as a clerk on census. Living in Boston's 3rd Ward in 1860. Pension award in Boston, Massachusetts. Killed in action, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 2 July 1863.

Sheehan, John

Private, 105th New York Infantry, Company I/Private, 94th New York Infantry, Company H. Enlisted 6 March 1862. A single labourer, born in Ontario, Canada to Irish immigrant parents. Step migrants. Enumerated in Lockport, New York in 1860. Transferred to 94th New York on 10 March 1863. Promoted Corporal. Pension claimed in Lockport, New York. Captured at the Weldon Railroad, Virginia, 19 August 1864. Died in Confederate prison, Salisbury, North Carolina, 19 November 1864.

Sheren, James

Private, 2nd Kentucky Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 6 June 1861. A married stonecutter from Co. Antrim. Promoted Sergeant. Pension claimed in Baltimore, Maryland. Killed in action, Shiloh, Tennessee, 7 April 1862.

Sheridan, Richard

Private, 2nd New York State Militia (82nd New York Infantry), Company E. Enlisted 21 May 1861. Single. A book binder, born in New York to Irish immigrant parents. Lived in New York City in 1860. Pension claimed in Blackwell's Island Alms House, New York City. A Corporal when he was killed in action, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 3 July 1863.

Sherry, John

Private, 7th Pennsylvania Reserves, Company K. Enlisted 27 July 1861. Single. A weaver born in Pennsylvania to Irish parents. Lived in Philadelphia's 19th Ward in 1860. Pension paid out in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Killed in action, White Oak Swamp, Virginia, 30 June 1862.

Slattery, John (1)

Private, 12th Massachusetts Infantry, Company H. Enlisted 26 June 1861. A single labourer born in Massachusetts to Irish immigrant parents. Enumerated in Boston's 3rd Ward in 1860. Pension paid in South Weymouth, Massachusetts. Killed in action, Thoroughfare Gap, Virginia, 28 August 1862.

Slattery, John (2)

Private, 40th Massachusetts Infantry, Company C. Enlisted 25 July 1862. Married. An operative born in New York to Irish parents. Pension paid out in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Died a prisoner of war in Florence, South Carolina, 6 October 1864.

Sullivan, John (1)

Landsman, USS *Underwriter*. Assigned Massachusetts. Enlisted in 1862. Single. A teamster from Co. Cork. Also recorded as a labourer. Pension claimed in Boston, Massachusetts. Captured 2 February 1864 off New Bern, North Carolina. Died 15 June 1864 in Confederate prison, Andersonville, Georgia.

Sullivan, John (2)

Corporal, 99th New York Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 28 September 1861. Single. A carpenter from Tralee, Co. Kerry. Pension paid out in New York City. Discharged for disability 25 March 1862. Died of consumption and dropsy in New York City, 10 October 1862.

Sullivan, John (3)

Private, 102nd New York Infantry, Company D. Enlisted 4 January 1862. Single, unknown occupation. Born in Vermont to Irish immigrant parents. Lied about his age in order to enlist. Lived in Angelica, New York in 1860. Pension paid in Angelica, New York. Died of pneumonia, Washington D.C., 18 March 1862.

Tiernan, Martin

Private, 61st New York Infantry, Company B. Enlisted 10 October 1861. Single. An apprentice hatter from Co. Roscommon. Promoted Corporal. Enumerated in New York's 6th Ward in 1860. Pension claimed in New York City. Killed in action, Fair Oaks, Virginia, 1 June 1862.

Toomey, Denis

Private, 2nd Massachusetts Heavy Artillery, Company D. Enlisted 10 August 1863, but a Veteran Volunteer, having served in Company A of the 6th Massachusetts Infantry, enlisting 31 August 1862. A labourer born in Ireland. Mustered out 3 September 1865, survived service.

Toomey, John

Private, 15th Massachusetts Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 12 July 1861. A single shoemaker from Co. Cork. Living in Oxford, Massachusetts in 1860. Pension claimed in Oxford, Massachusetts. Killed in action, Fair Oaks, Virginia, 31 May 1862.

Toomey, Timothy

Private, 160th New York Infantry, Company E. Enlisted 31 August 1862. A single farmer, born in Ireland. Pension paid out in East Bloomfield, New York. Wounded in action, Winchester, Virginia, 19 September 1864, died of wounds 26 September 1864.

Traynor, Charles

Private, 69th New York Infantry, Company F. Enlisted 16 August 1862. Single. A bricklayer of Irish nativity. Pension awarded in New York City. Killed in action on picket at Skinner's House, before Petersburg, Virginia, 25 March 1865.

Ward, John

Private, 4th Maine Infantry, Company I. Enlisted 15 June 1861. He is recorded living in Searsport in 1860 with a group of Ship's Carpenters. His occupation is not recorded. Captured at Fredericksburg, Virginia, 13 December 1862. Mustered out 19 July 1864. Survived service.

Weldon, George

Private, 140th New York Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 30 August 1862. A single farm labourer born in Ireland. Living in Riga, New York in 1860 when he was 16-years-old. Wounded at Laurel Hill, Virginia, 8 May 1864. Promoted Corporal, mustered out with company, 3 June 1865. Survived service.

Welsh, James

Private, 82nd Pennsylvania Infantry, Company G. Enlisted 24 August 1861. A single mason, born in Ireland. Veteran Volunteer. Pension claimed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Killed in action, Cold Harbor, Virginia, 1 June 1864.

White, John

Private, 2nd Massachusetts Heavy Artillery, Company C. Enlisted 21 July 1863. Single. A mechanic from Templemore Co. Tipperary. Enumerated in Easthampton, Massachusetts in 1860. Was 17-years-old at enlistment. Pension award in Northampton, Massachusetts. Died of Yellow Fever, New Bern, North Carolina, 23 October 1864.

Williams, Charles

Sergeant, 69th Pennsylvania Infantry, Company H. Enlisted 1 December 1861. A single carpenter born in Pennsylvania. First Sergeant. Pension paid in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Died of wounds received at Petersburg, Virginia, 17 June 1864.

Bibliography

PENSION FILES

The files are held in the National Archives and Record Administration, Washington D.C. where they form part of Record Group 15, Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Original scanned images of the pension files were consulted on https://fold3.com, with a small number of supplementary files examined in person at the National Archives.

Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of the Army

Widow's Certificate No. 954, Approved Pension File of Ann Dunnigan, Widow of Patrick Dunnigan, Company E, 88th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 1056, Approved Pension File of Elizabeth McLaughlin, Widow of Francis McLaughlin, Battery D, 1st Pennsylvania Light Artillery.

Widow's Certificate No. 1694, Approved Pension File of Ann McGinness, Mother of James McGinness, Company G, 90th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 2177, Approved Pension File of Catharine McGaffigan, Widow of James McGaffifan, Company A, 63rd New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 2415, Approved Pension File of Catherine Conway, Widow of John Conway, Company K, 69 New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 2537, Approved Pension File of Joanna Leahey, Widow of James Leahey, Company D, 99th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 3130, Approved Pension File of Mary Harrigan, Mother of James Harrigan, Company D, 72nd Pennsylvania Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 4028, Approved Pension File of Eliza Connell, Mother of William Connell, Company B, 7th Vermont Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 4642, Approved Pension File of Rebecca McCarthy, Mother of Thomas McCarthy, Company A, 12th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 4869, Approved Pension File of Bridget Tiernan, Mother of Martin Tiernan, Company B, 61st New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 5388, Approved Pension File of Johanna Toomey, Mother of John Toomey, Company E, 15th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 6206, Approved Pension File of Mary Dooley, Mother of Patrick Dooley, Company C, 40th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 8306, Approved Pension File of Ann Carroll, Mother of William Delaney, Company F, 43rd New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 8731, Approved Pension File of Margaret Sullivan, Mother of John Sullivan, Company I, 99th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 8938, Approved Pension File of Julia Connerty, Mother of Michael Connerty, Company C, 88th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 9732, Approved Pension File of Margaret Briody, Mother of James Briody, Company I, 20th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 10231, Approved Pension File of Mary Carroll, Widow of James Carroll, Company G, 42nd New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 10461, Approved Pension File of Mary Cochrane [Corcoran], Mother of John Cochrane [Corcoran], Company C, 2nd Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 10604, Approved Pension File of Mary Mahon, Mother of John Mahon, Company I, 91st New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 10828, Approved Pension File of Margaret Cody, Mother of William Cody, Company K, 3rd Rhode Island Heavy Artllery.

Widow’s Certificate No. 11095, Approved Pension File of Maria Sheriden [Sheren], Widow of James Sheriden [Sheren], Company E, 2nd Kentucky Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 11238, Approved Pension File of Mary, Danie, Catherine and Margaret Deasy, Minor Children of John Deasy, Company I, 20th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 12866, Approved Pension File of Mary Sullivan, Mother of John Sullivan, Company D, 102nd New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 13603, Approved Pension File of Margaret Brady, Widow of Michael Brady, Company F, 156th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 14441, Approved Pension File of Mary Keenan, Mother of Jeremiah Keenan, Company G, 140th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 15721, Approved Pension File of Mary Shea, Mother of John Shea, Company B, 1st Kansas Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 16416, Approved Pension File of Margaret Martin, Widow of Michael Martin (Alias John Martin), Company I, 2nd Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 18510, Approved Pension File of Catharine Carney, Mother of Patrick Carney, Company D, 69th Pennsylvania Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 18836, Approved Pension File of Bridget Duff, Mother of William Duff, Company I, 10th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 19650, Approved Pension File of Bridget Coffey, Widow of Patrick Coffey, Company D, 69th New York State Militia.

Widow’s Certificate No. 20688, Approved Pension File of Elizabeth J. Harnett, Mother of William J. Harnett, Company F, 4th United States Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 22521, Approved Pension File of Mary Kelly, Mother of Patrick Kelly, Company G, 28th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 23216, Approved Pension File of Margaret Fitzgerald, Mother of James C. Fitzgerald, Company F, 8th Illinois Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 23343, Approved Pension File of Bridget Feeny, Mother of John Feeny, Company D, 170th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 25547, Approved Pension File of Mary Dolan, Mother of William Dolan, Company I, 174th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 25637, Approved Pension File of Catharine Eagan, Widow of Matthew Eagan, Company C, 72nd New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 25992, Approved Pension File of Agnes and Samuel Kerr, Minor Children of James Kerr (Alias John Kerr), Company E, 26th Pennsylvania Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 26018, Approved Pension File of Ann Loughran, Widow of William Loughran, Company C, 88th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 26080, Approved Pension File of Margaret Kelly, Mother of John Kelly, Company F, 1st New York Cavalry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 26768, Approved Pension File of Catharine Higgns, Mother of Michael H. Higgins, Company B, 125th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 26932, Approved Pension File of Margaret Connely, Mother of Patrick Connely, Company G, 6th Connecticut Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 27032, Approved Pension File of Honora O’Connell, Mother of John G. O’Connell, Company H, 2nd Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 27309, Approved Pension File of Mary Brennan, Widow of John Brennan (Alias John Burns), Company H, 11th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 27522, Approved Pension File of Margaret Doyle, Widow of Thomas Martin Doyle Doyle (Alias Thomas Doyle), Company I, 4th Maine Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 28175, Approved Pension File of Margaret Sharkey, Mother of James Sharkey, Company C, 21st New York Cavalry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 31563, Approved Pension File of Bridget Meehan, Widow of Michael Meehan, Company G, 47th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 31621, Approved Pension File of Bridget Finnerty, Mother of James Finnerty, Company B, 72nd Illinois Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 31685, Approved Pension File of Ann Grimes, Mother of John Grimes, Company K, 3rd Rhode Island Heavy Artillery.

Widow’s Certificate No. 32321, Approved Pension File of Catharine O’Keefe, Widow of David O’Keefe, Company A, 9th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 37552, Approved Pension File of Julia Hayes, Mother of James Hayes, Company C, 38th Illinois Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 38010, Approved Pension File of Jane Diver, Mother of Thomas C. Diver, Company I, 69th Pennsylvania Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 39990, Approved Pension File of Margaret Delany [Delaney], Mother of John Delany [Delaney], Company A, 18th Connectiut Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 40248, Approved Pension File of Ellen Carroll, Mother of Michael Carroll, Company C, 72nd New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 45770, Approved Pension File of Elisabeth McIntyre, Mother of William McIntyre, Company H, 95th Pennsylvania Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 45783, Approved Pension File of Bridget Casey, Mother of John Casey, Company C, 45th Illinois Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 46367, Approved Pension File of Honorah Toomey, Mother of Timothy L. Toomey, Company E, 160th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 47243, Approved Pension File of Mary Horin [Horan], Mother of Patrick Horin [Horan], Company H, 67th New York Infantry.

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Widow's Certificate No. 71872, Approved Pension File of Hannora Sweeney, Mother of Martin Noonan, Company K, 64th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 74825, Approved Pension File of Margaret O’Donnell, Mother of Hugh O’Donnell, Company C, 29th Pennsylvania Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 75056, Approved Pension File of Alice Fitzpatrick, Mother of James Fitzpatrick, Company A, 96th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 75830, Approved Pension File of Elizabeth Kinnane, Minor Sister of Patrick Kinnane, Company K, 155th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 76523, Approved Pension File of Mary Davis, Widow of Smith Davis, Company I, 65th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 77208, Approved Pension File of Mary Carr, Widow of Thomas Carr, Company H, 20th New York Infantry.

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Widow’s Certificate No. 79466, Approved Pension File of Mary Sheridan, Mother of William Martin, Company K, 69th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 80051, Approved Pension File of Bridget McHugh, Mother of James McHugh, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 19th United States Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 82386, Approved Pension File of Alive Hickey, Widow of James Hickey, Company B, 164th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 83617, Approved Pension File of Thomasina Collins, Mother of Daniel P. Collins, Company G, 155th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 84143, Approved Pension File of Hannah O’Brien, Mother of Cornelius O’Brien, Company F, 16th Illinois Infantry.

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Widow’s Certificate No. 84797, Approved Pension File of Mary Mooney, Mother of Edward Mooney, Company E, 19th Iowa Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 85074, Approved Pension File of Elisabeth Welsh, Mother of James Welsh, Company G, 82nd Pennsylvania Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 85142, Approved Pension File of Bridget Griffin, Mother of Patrick Griffin, 6th Independent Battery, Massachusetts Light Artillery.

Widow's Certificate No. 85252, Approved Pension File of Rosey McCourt, Mother of Mathew McCourt, Company A, 1st Michigan Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 86354, Approved Pension File of Mary O’Connor, Mother of John O’Connor, Company K, 151st New York Infantry.

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Widow’s Certificate No. 87287, Approved Pension File of Margaret Maroney, Mother of William Maroney, Company B, 164th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 88094, Approved Pension File of Margaret Dillon, Mother of Daniel Dillon, Company D, 10th Illinois Cavalry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 88338, Approved Pension File of Mary Keating, Mother of Thomas Keating, Company D, 94th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 88894, Approved Pension File of Catharine Trainor [Traynor], Mother of Charles Trainor [Traynor], Company F, 69th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 88981, Approved Pension File of Mary Hanlin, Mother of Edward Hanlin, Company E, 12th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 89342, Approved Pension File of Margaret Finton [Fenton], Mother of John Finton [Fenton], Company B, 90th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 91242, Approved Pension File of Catharine Murry [Murray], Mother of John Murry [Murray], Company F, 16th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 91465, Approved Pension File of Bridget Flynn, Mother of Richard Flynn, Company K, 117th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 92361, Approved Pension File of Catharine Carroll, Mother of William Carroll, Company I, 7th Connecticut Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 93096, Approved Pension File of Elisabeth Sherry, Mother of John Sherry, Company K, 7th Pennsylvania Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 93207, Approved Pension File of Ann Dougherty, Mother of John Dougherty, Company F, 63rd New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 93487, Approved Pension File of Mary Sheehan, Mother of John Sheehan, Company H, 94th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 94532, Approved Pension File of Catharine Lynch, Mother of John C. Lynch, Company C, 69th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 94716, Approved Pension File of Sarah Collins, Mother of Patrick Collins, Company F, 6th Maine Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 96027, Approved Pension File of Rosanna McGee, Mother of James McGee, Company F, 132nd New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 96255, Approved Pension File of Ellen McCormick, Mother of Michael McCormick, Company G, 65th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 96706, Approved Pension File of Margaret McCaffrey, Widow of Patrick McCaffrey, Company F, 69th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 96716, Approved Pension File of Mary Ford, Mother of Edmund Ford, Company K, 8th Kansas Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 97336, Approved Pension File of Mary Barry, Mother of Garret G. Barry, Company M, 3rd Massachustts Cavalry.

Widow's Certificate No. 97970, Approved Pension File of Mary Hennessey, Mother of John Hennessey (Alias John Quinn), Company H, 7th New York Heavy Artillery.

Widow’s Certificate No. 98455, Approved Pension File of Elizabeth A. Casey, Widow of John J. Casey (Alias John Walker), Company C, 2nd United States Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 98727, Approved Pension File of Eleanor Hogg, Widow of Farrell Hogg, Company D, 88th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 98814, Approved Pension File of Margaret McGee, Mother of James E. McGee, Company H, 69th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 98996, Approved Pension File of Mary Mooney, Widow of Felix Mooney, Company D, 61st New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 100498, Approved Pension File of Jane Laverty, Mother of Archibald Laverty, Company F, 1st New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 100612, Approved Pension File of Nancy Carr, Mother of Bernard Carr, Company C, 79th Illinois Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 101875, Approved Pension File of Honora Crowley, Mother of John Crowley, Company C, 3rd New Hampshire Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 103233, Approved Pension File of Nancy Dwyer, Mother of William Dwyer, Company B, 63rd New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 103714, Approved Pension File of Mary E. Boyle, Mother of John Boyle, Company I, 38th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 103877, Approved Pension File of Bridget Burns, Mother of Henry Burns, Company D, 59th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 105102, Approved Pension File of Ann Gannon, Mother of John Gannon, Company G, 26th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 106040, Approved Pension File of Mary Sheedy, Mother of Joseph E. Sheedy, Company E, 28th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 107142, Approved Pension File of Ellen Mahair [Mahar], Mother of Nicholas Mahair [Mahar], Company M, 16th New York Heavy Artillery.

Widow’s Certificate No. 107715, Approved Pension File of Patrick Brady, Father of Michael Brady, Company A, 75th Ohio Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 108486, Approved Pension File of Hannah Livingston, Mother of James Livingston, Company E, 155th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 109749, Approved Pension File of Ann McConnell, Mother of Patrick McConnell, Company I, 4th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 110019, Approved Pension File of Mary Finigan, Mother of James Finigan, Company E, 4th New York Heavy Artillery.

Widow's Certificate No. 114360, Approved Pension File of Mary McGiff, Mother of Christopher McGiff, Company A, 119th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 114594, Approved Pension File of Margaret Weaver, Mother of Jhn Kelly, Company C, 16th Unted States Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 114954, Approved Pension File of Margaret Hand, Mother of James Hand, Company H, 164th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 115555, Approved Pension File of Catharine Dougherty, Mother of Timothy Dougherty, Company C, 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 115828, Approved Pension File of Ellen Bowler, Widow of Thomas Bowler (Alias Thomas Murphy), Company A, 69th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 116032, Approved Pension File of Ann Corcoran, Widow of James Corcoran, Company G, 5th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 116156, Approved Pension File of Anna E. Barrington, Widow of Richard Barrington, Company A, 1st Missouri Engineers.

Widow’s Certificate No. 116873, Approved Pension File of Mary Kennedy, Mother of Thomas Madigan, Company I, 69th New York State Militia.

Widow’s Certificate No. 117088, Approved Pension File of Mary Flaherty, Mother of William Flaherty (Alias William State), Company K, 6th New Hampshire Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 117744, Approved Pension File of Catharine Kennedy, Mother of John Kennedy, Company E, 10th Ohio Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 117836, Approved Pension File of John Sheridan, Father of Richard Sheridan, Company E, 82nd New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 120669, Approved Pension File of Patrick Larkin, Father of Denis Larkin (Alias William Collins), Company H, 6th New York Heavy Artillery.

Widow’s Certificate No. 121011, Approved Pension File of Allice Lane, Mother of John Lane, Company A, 12th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 123070, Approved Pension File of Catharine Burns, Mother of Felix Burns, Company E, 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 124030, Approved Pension File of Ellen Ryan, Mother of Michael Ryan, Company E, 95th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 124498, Approved Pension File of Patrick McKenna, Father of Charles McKenna, Company I, 3rd Rhode Island Cavalry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 124533, Approved Pension File of John, Thomas and Margaret Carraher, Minor Children of Patrick Carraher (Alias John Carrier), Company A, 82nd New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 125192, Approved Pension File of Margaret O’Herrin, Mother of James O’Herrin (Alias Frank Welch), Company H, 17th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 126148, Approved Pension File of Mary Daly, Widow of John Daly (Alias John Ryan), Company A, 51st New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 126607, Approved Pension File of Bridget Reiley, Mother of Thomas Reiley (Alias Thomas McGory), Company D, 139th New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 126742, Approved Pension File of John Foran, Minor Child of Michael Foran (Alias Miles Ford), Company C, 5th Pennsylvania Reserves.

Widow’s Certificate No. 127032, Approved Pension File of Margaret Galliven, Mother of Patrick Galliven, Company D, 10th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 127929, Approved Pension File of Ann MCFarland, Mother of Terrence McFarland, Company D, 182nd New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 129489, Approved Pension File of Margaret Cone, Mother of James O’Neil, Company I, 2nd New York Mounted Rifles.

Widow’s Certificate No. 130731, Approved Pension File of Mary Slattery, Mother of John G. Slattery, Company H, 12th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 130737, Approved Pension File of Honora Dorgan, Mother of Jeremiah Dorgan. Company H, 2nd Louisiana Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 132012, Approved Pension File of Edmund Dwyer, Father of Edmund Dwyer, Company B, 23rd Illinois Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 132926, Approved Pension File of Ann J. Boyd, Widow of Samuel Boyd, Company E, 14th New Jersey Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 133177, Approved Pension File of Mary Doyle, Mother of Thomas Doyle, Company D, 1st Massachusetts Cavalry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 134153, Approved Pension File of Walter Henry, Father of James Henry, Company E, 11th United States Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 134902, Approved Pension File of Ellen Cullen, Mother of Francis Cullen, Company H, 24th New York Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 137303, Approved Pension File of Mary Curry, Mother of Bernard Curry, Company B, 6th United States Cavalry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 138484, Approved Pension File of Margaret McGillicuddy, Widow of John McGillicuddy (Alias John McCarty), Company I, 173rd New York Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 138689, Approved Pension File of Mary Finegan, Mother of Peter Finegan, Company K, 116th Pennsylvania Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 138896, Approved Pension File of Noble Barry, Father of William Barry (Alias William Porter), Company I, 10th Ohio Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No.139152, Approved Pension File of Eliza Graney [Greaney], Mother of Charles Graney [Greaney], Company C, 9th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 141783, Approved Pension File of Mary Welch, Mother of Thomas Welch, Company H, 20th Maine Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 142303, Approved Pension File of Catherine Honors (Fitzpatrick), Widow of Edward Fitzpatrick (Alias Edward Honors), Company K, 10th New Jersey Infantry.

Widow's Certificate No. 143339, Approved Pension File of Mary Daly, Mother of Michael Daly, Company A, 7th Illinois Cavalry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 144840, Approved Pension File of Kate Dugan, Mother of Patrick Dugan, Company E, 39th Illinois Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 145128, Approved Pension File of Mary A. Slattery, Widow of John Slattery, Company C, 40th Massachusetts Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 161452, Approved Pension File of Margaret Devlin, Widow of Charles Devlin, Company B, 35th Indiana Infantry.

Widow’s Certificate No. 259125, Approved Pension File of Louisa H. Nigthingale, Mother of Frederick Nightingale, Company I, 118th New York Infantry.

Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900

Survivor Certificate No. 266425, Approved Pension File of John O’Brien, Company F, 10th Illinois Cavalry.

Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of the Navy

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 1580, Approved Pension File of Timothy Harrington, Minor Child of Timothy Harrington (Alias Thomas Harrington), USS *Cumberland*.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 1994, Approved Pension File of Elizabeth O’Neil, Mother of Daniel O’Neil, United States Marine Corps.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 2023, Approved Pension File of Margaret Campbell, Mother of Peter Campbell, United States Marine Corps.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 2163, Approved Pension File of Mary Delanty, Mother of Patrick H. Delanty, United States Marine Corps.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 2196, Approved Pension File of Eliza Kellegher (Alias Eliza Kelly), Widow of Patrick Kellegher (Alias John Kelly), USS *Frolic*.

Navy Widow's Certificate 2254, Approved Pension File of Michael Sullivan, Father of John Sullivan, USS *Underwriter*.

Navy Widow's Certificate No. 2255, Approved Pension File of Thomas McGowan, Father of Owen J. McGowan, USS *Keystone State*.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 2286, Approved Pension File of Mary Burns, Mother of James Burns (Alias George Lacey), USS *North Carolina*.

Navy Widow's Certificate No. 2318, Approved Pension File of Mary Horgan, Mother of Denis Horgan, USS *Sachem*.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 2356, Approved Pension File of Bryan Carey, Father of James Carey, USS *Carondelet*.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 2390, Approved Pension File of Mary Robinson, Mother of George Doherty (Alias George Robinson), USS *Horace Beals*.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 2479, Approved Pension File of John O’Donnell, Father of Charles O’Donnell, United States Marine Corps.

Navy Widow's Certificate No. 2633, Approved Pension File of Mary Driscoll, Mother of Dennis Driscoll, USS *Metacomet*.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 2732, Approved Pension File of Honora O’Brien, Mother of Patrick O’Brien, USS *Clifton*.

Navy Widow's Certificate No. 2821, Approved Pension File of Mary Riley, Mother of John Riley, United States Marines Corps.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 2867, Approved Pension File of John Finan, Father of Patrick Finan, USS *Wabash*.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 2901, Approved Pension File of Catharine Carroll, Mother of William Carroll, USS *Mound City*.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 2920, Approved Pension File of Mary Ann Crowley, Widow of John Crowley, USS *Santiago de Cuba*.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 2947, Approved Pension File of Sarah Dougherty, Mother of Patrick Dougherty, USS *South Carolina*.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 3230, Approved Pension File of Patrick Droney, Child of Mathew Droney (Alias Mathew Callahan), United States Marine Corps.

Navy Widow's Certificate No. 3265, Approved Pension File of Dennis Driscoll, Father of Daniel Driscoll, USS *Lexington*.

Navy Widow's Certificate No. 4104, Approved Pension File of Ann Hynes, Widow of Thomas Hynes, USS *Cyane*.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 4180, Approved Pension File of Henry Clark, Father of Henry Clark, USS *Hartford*.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 4219, Approved Pension File of William Buckley, Father of John Buckley, USS *Weehawken*.

Navy Widow’s Certificate No. 18084, Approved Pension File of Mary O’Brien, Widow of John O’Brien, United States Marine Corps.

Navy Widow's Certificate No. 18243, Approved Pension File of Mary W. Scanlan, Widow of John J. Scanlan (Alias Charles E. Stanley), USS *Mystic*.

Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Civil War and Later Navy Veterans

Navy Survivor Pension Certificate No. 5517, Approved Pension File of William H. Finn, USS *Shawsheen*.

OTHER PRIMARY SOURCES

The majority of these materials were accessed digitally online. Unless otherwise stated, only original scans of original documents were consulted. These primary sources and their repositories of origin are detailed below. These records were largely utilised to confirm ethnicity and add further contextual knowledge concerning the backgrounds of individual servicemen.

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Record Group 15, Records of the Department of Veterans Administration

Organization Index to Pension Files of Veterans who served between 1861 and 1900

Record Group 24, Records of the Bureau of Naval Personnel

Weekly Returns of Enlistments at Naval Rendezvous ("Enlistment Rendezvous") Jan. 6, 1855–Aug. 8, 1891

Record Group 29, Records of the Bureau of the Census

Seventh Census of the United States, 1850

Eighth Census of the United States, 1860

Ninth Census of the United States, 1870

Tenth Census of the United States, 1880

Special Schedule of the Eleventh Census, 1890, Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office

Book Records of Union Volunteer Organizations: Descriptive Books

Compiled Military Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers

Final Statements 1862-1899

Register of Deaths of Volunteers, Compiled 1861-1865

Record Group 110, Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau

Consolidated Lists of Civil War Draft Registrations, 1863-1865

New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston

1855 Massachusetts State Census

New York State Archives, Albany

New York State Adjutant General's Office Civil War Muster Roll Abstracts of New York State Volunteers, United States Sharpshooters, and United States Colored Troops

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

Record Group 11, Records of the Pennsylvania Department of Health

Pennsylvania Death Certificates 1906-1963

ONLINE DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

Ancestry.com: https://ancestry.com/

Fold 3: https://fold3.com/

GenealogyBank: https://genealogybank.com/

Illinois, Databases of Illinois Veterans, Index, 1775-1995: https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9759/

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